

LONDON BOROUGH OF WANDSWORTH

WEST HILL DISTRICT LIBRARY, WANDSWORTH,
LONDON, S.W.18.


METROPOLITAN SPECIAL COLLECTION
METROPOLITAN JOINT FICTION RESERVE

THIS BOOK SHOULD BE RETURNED ON OR BEFORE THE DATE
STAMPED BELOW.

~~31.10.77.~~

~~11.7.84~~





Digitized by the Internet Archive
in 2022 with funding from
Kahle/Austin Foundation



BURNING OF THE "KENT."

GREAT SHIPWRECKS:

A RECORD OF PERILS AND DISASTERS

AT SEA.—1544 TO 1877.



"Now on the mountain-wave on high they ride,
Then downward plunge beneath the involving tide."
FALCONER'S *Shipwreck*.



Thomas Nelson and Sons,

LONDON, EDINBURGH, AND NEW YORK.

GREAT SHIPWRECKS.

A RECORD OF PERILS AND DISASTERS AT SEA.
1844-1877.

BY THE

AUTHOR OF "THE MEDITERRANEAN ILLUSTRATED,"
"THE ARCTIC WORLD," &c.

"Upon the watery plain,
The wrecks are all thy deed."

BYRON.

LONDON: THOMAS NELSON AND SONS.
EDINBURGH AND NEW YORK.

1880

NCS



910.453 GRE
M46377

CONTENTS.

I. Loss of the <i>Mary Rose</i> : July 1544,	9
II. Loss of the <i>New Horn</i> : November 1619,	13
III. Loss of the <i>Wager</i> : May 1741,	28
IV. Burning of the <i>Prince</i> : July 26, 1752,	64
V. Loss of the <i>Grosvenor</i> : August 1782,	76
VI. Loss of the <i>Royal George</i> : August 1782,	88
VII. Loss of the <i>Halswell</i> : January 1786,	94
VIII. Wreck of the Frigates <i>L'Astrolabe</i> and <i>La Boussole</i> : 1788, ..	100
IX. Loss of the <i>Proserpine</i> : February 1799,	118
X. Loss of the <i>Sceptre</i> : November 1799,	127
XI. Loss of the <i>Queen Charlotte</i> : March 1800,	139
XII. Loss of the <i>Lady Hobart</i> : June 1802,	143
XIII. Loss of the <i>St. George</i> and the <i>Defence</i> : December 1811, ..	150
XIV. Loss of the <i>Atalante</i> : November 1813,	158
XV. Loss of the <i>Medusa</i> : July 1816,	168
XVI. Loss of the <i>Harpooner</i> : November 1816,	182
XVII. A Great Storm: January 1817,	188
XVIII. Loss of the <i>Alceste</i> : February 1817,	194
XIX. Loss of the <i>William and Mary</i> : October 1817,	205
XX. Wreck of the <i>Neptune</i> : December 24, 1821,	209
XXI. Loss of the <i>Drake</i> : June 1822,	217
XXII. Loss of the <i>Kent</i> : March 1825,	229
XXIII. Wreck of the <i>Aventure</i> : July 25, 1825,	242
XXIV. Wreck of the <i>Amphitrite</i> : August 31, 1833,	252
XXV. Loss of the <i>Earl of Eldon</i> : September 1834,	261
XXVI. Loss of the <i>Forfarshire</i> : September 1838,	269
XXVII. Wreck of <i>La Marne</i> : January 25, 1841,	280
XXVIII. Loss of the <i>Pegasus</i> : July 1843,	288
XXIX. Wreck of the <i>Doris</i> : September 19, 1845,	295
XXX. Wreck of the <i>Papin</i> : December 7, 1845,	299
XXXI. Loss of the <i>Tweed</i> : February 1846,	302
XXXII. Loss of the <i>Central America</i> : September 1847,	307

XXXIII. Loss of the Avenger: December 1847,	..	..	..	..	313
XXXIV. Loss of the Forth: January 13, 1849,	..	..	..	..	323
XXXV. Loss of the Amazon: January 1852,	..	..	..	..	336
XXXVI. Loss of the Birkenhead: February 1852,	..	..	..	..	348
XXXVII. Loss of the Tayleur: January 1854, ..	..	..	..	..	359
XXXVIII. Wreck of the Henri IV. and the Pluto: November 13, 1854,	..	..	..	..	365
XXXIX. Wreck of the Duroc: August 13, 1856,	..	..	..	..	375
XL. Loss of the Royal Charter: October 1859,	..	..	..	..	386
XLI. Loss of the Bombay: December 1864,	..	..	..	..	397
XLII. Wreck of the Borysthènes: December 15, 1865,	..	..	..	..	404
XLIII. Loss of the London: January 1866,	..	..	..	..	413
XLIV. Loss of the Evening Star: October 2, 1866,	..	..	..	..	428
XLV. Wreck of the John Baptist: March 17, 1867,	..	..	..	..	434
XLVI. Wreck of the Queen of the South: April 25, 1868,	..	..	..	..	439
XLVII. Adventures of the Juno: April to November, 1868,	..	..	..	..	442
XLVIII. Wreck of the Parangon: September 14, 1869,	..	..	..	..	453
XLIX. Loss of the Captain: September 7, 1870,	..	..	..	..	462
L. In a Cyclone: The Amazon: October 1870,	..	..	..	..	472
LI. Loss of the Megæra: June 1871,	..	..	..	..	479
LII. Wreck of the Northfleet: January 22, 1873,	..	..	..	..	492
LIII. Wreck of the Atlantic: April 1, 1873,	..	..	..	..	507
LIV. Wreck of the Ville-du-Havre: November 22, 1873,	..	..	..	..	512
LV. Wreck of the Chusan: October 21, 1874,	..	..	..	..	515
LVI. Burning of the Cospatrick: November 18, 1874,	..	..	..	..	529
LVII. Foundering of the La Plata: November 29, 1874,	..	..	..	..	544
LVIII. Wreck of the Schiller: May 7, 1875,	..	..	..	..	558
LIX. Loss of the Deutschland: December 5, 1875,	..	..	..	..	569
LX. Loss of the Strathmore: July 1, 1875,	..	..	..	..	578

A BRIEF NAUTICAL GLOSSARY, ..	..	..	..	..	..	622
TABLE OF WRECKS, ..	..	..	..	..	..	626

GREAT SHIPWRECKS.

I.

LOSS OF THE "MARY ROSE."

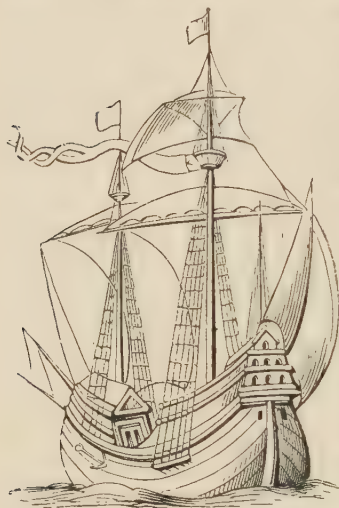
July 1544.



WHEN war broke out between France and England in 1544, the first blows of the French were naturally aimed at Portsmouth, which was then our only naval arsenal; and thither a formidable fleet was despatched, under the command of the gallant D'Annebault, Admiral of France. It consisted of one hundred and fifty large ships, twenty-five galleys, and fifty small vessels and transports; an armada which, having safely accomplished the passage of the English Channel, arrived off the back of the Isle of Wight on the 18th of July.

The English fleet, commanded by Lord Lisle, had just been reviewed by Henry VIII. It was far inferior in force to the great French armament; but its vessels, on the whole, were of superior build, and their crews were famed for seamanship. The largest ship in the fleet was the *Mary Rose*; so named, partly in honour of the Virgin Mary, and partly in allusion to the Tudor cognizance of the rose. She was of

six hundred tons, and armed with sixty pieces of heavy ordnance. When newly built, some two-and-thirty years before,



SHIP—TIME OF HENRY VIII.

Sir Edward Howard declared her to be "the noblest ship of sail at this hour in Christendom, and the flower of all ships that ever sailed." Her captain was a man of undoubted courage, though of little nautical experience—Sir George Carew; but her crew—a picked one of volunteer warriors and right worshipful gentlemen—had not learned the value of discipline, and it was said of them that they were all "fitter, in their own conceit, to order than obey," and

were quite "incompetent for ordinary work."

D'Annebault's mighty host steadily progressed round the Isle of Wight, piloted by boats with sounding-lines, which carefully indicated the exact depth of water. They swept past the glittering cliffs of Ventnor and Bonchurch in stateliest array, while the beacon-fires, kindled on every conspicuous height from Aston Down to the Culvers, warned the islanders of their approach. Soon they rounded the richly-wooded headland of St. Helen's Point, and drew up in a formidable line of battle, nearly four miles in length, which extended from Brading Harbour to the then little fishing-village of La Rye, or Ryde. Fourteen English ships were despatched to reconnoitre this superb array; but D'Annebault bringing up his galleys to meet them, after a few dropping

shots they retired, and night silently encompassed the two hostile fleets.

The morning which followed was breathlessly calm. The English fleet lay inside the great sand-bank of the Spit, with heavy sails hanging motionless on the yards, while from the chimneys of the cottages on shore the smoke rose in blue columns straight up into the air. "It was a morning," says the historian Froude, "beautiful with the beauty of an English summer and an English sea; but, for the work before him, Lord Lisle would have gladly heard the west wind among his shrouds. At this time he had not a galley to oppose to the five-and-twenty which D'Annebault had brought with him, and in such weather the galleys had all the advantages of the modern gunboats. From the single long gun which each of them carried in the bow they poured shot for an hour into the tall stationary hulls of the line-of-battle ships, and, keeping in constant motion, they were themselves in perfect security. According to the French account of the action, the *Great Harry* suffered so severely as almost to be sunk at her anchorage; and had the calm continued, they believed that they could have destroyed the entire fleet. As the morning drew on, however, the off-shore breeze sprung up suddenly, the large ships began to glide through the water, a number of frigates—long, narrow vessels, so swift, the French said, they could outsail their fastest shallops—came out 'with incredible swiftness,' and the fortune of the day was changed. The enemy were afraid to turn lest they should be run over, and if they attempted to escape into the wind, they would be cut off from their own fleet. The main line advanced barely in time to save them; and the English, whose object was to draw the enemy into action under the guns of their own fortress and among the shoals at the Spit, retired to the old ground. The loss on both sides had been

insignificant ; but the occasion was rendered memorable by a misfortune."

This misfortune was the total loss of the *Mary Rose*—a misfortune the more remarkable that it occurred nearly in the same spot, and through a very similar cause, as, at a later period, the wreck of the *Royal George*.

It appears that her ports were open for the expected engagement, and her guns run out ; but, rendered over-confident by the calm which prevailed, the crew had not sufficiently secured them. The wind rose suddenly, and as the *Mary Rose* heeled abruptly on one side, her windward tier of guns broke loose, rolled across the deck, and with their weight and momentum so depressed her to leeward, that the water poured in at the open ports, and filled the ship with such rapidity, that before any boats could be got out, or assistance secured, she sank with four hundred gallant Englishmen on board !

A strange fate for a vessel on the very first occasion that she bore the red cross of England in sight of an enemy ! Her loss was partly due, perhaps, to the inefficiency and want of nautical skill of her crew ; but partly also to the unwieldiness of her construction. To the heart of her royal master, who may be said to have been an eye-witness of the catastrophe, it was a very sore wound. He may have derived some consolation, indeed, from the fact that the French treasure-ship, *La Maîtresse*, sprung a dangerous leak, and had to be run ashore in Brading Haven ; but the wreck of the pride of his navy must have been felt by Henry as a grievous misadventure, for he was the first of our kings who fully appreciated the importance to England of a strong naval line of defence.

II.

LOSS OF THE "NEW HORN."

November 1619.



THE *New Horn*, a Dutch vessel of eleven hundred tons, sailed from the Texel, with a crew of two hundred and six men and officers, on the 28th of December 1618. On the 1st of January 1619 they lost sight of the English coast. In the very outset of the good ship's voyage she met with many misfortunes. In a heavy gale she suffered greatly, shipped three seas, and took a vast quantity of water into her hold. On the third day of the tempest the main-mast was carried away; but as the wind abated, the crew succeeded in making fast the rigging. The captain bore up for the Scilly Isles, and fell in with the *New Zealand*, bound for the East Indies. This vessel had ridden through the storm uninjured, and the *New Horn* endeavoured to keep company with her, though barely able to carry sufficient canvas. Another ship, bound for India, also came in sight, and sailed with them as far as the Canaries. They anchored at Fuego, and sent a boat ashore, but the Spaniards fired at it; and finding themselves not permitted to land, they stood out again to sea.

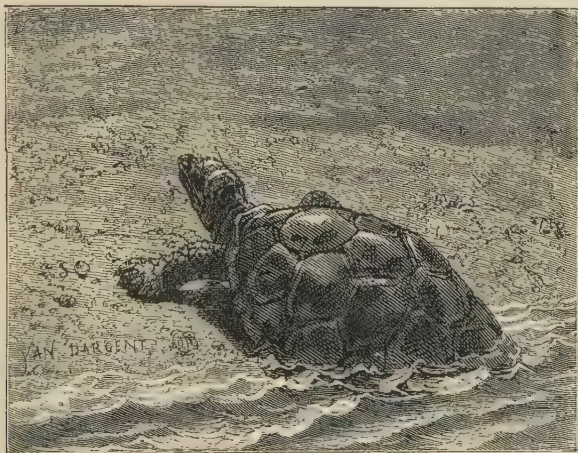
On reaching the Equator, they were becalmed for some days, and afterwards were visited with deluges of rain and

contrary winds, blowing from every quarter, which delayed them for three weeks. At night the sea rolled heavily, and was so lit up with phosphorescence that it might be compared to one vast sheet of fire. They held on for the Cape of Good Hope, but not making it readily, determined to continue their voyage, as they had a sufficient quantity of water, and the crew were in good health. After having been at sea five months, the *New Horn* separated from her consorts, which were bound for different ports.

The crew had hitherto enjoyed good health, but symptoms of disease now manifested themselves. No fewer than forty were confined to their hammocks, and many others were feeble and ailing. The captain therefore steered for Madagascar; but on reaching the island, found the surf so violent that no boats could hope to live in it. The *New Horn* again stood out to sea; but as the sick murmured greatly, the captain made for Mascarenhas,* which they soon sighted, anchoring in forty fathoms of water. The long-boat having been sent ashore, returned with some turtles. The invalids were afterwards landed, and many of those who were stricken with scurvy, rolling themselves in the fresh luxuriant grass, declared they already felt better. Blue pigeons abounded in the neighbourhood of their encampment, and were so tame as to be caught without difficulty. Upwards of two hundred were victimized on the first day. Other sea-fowl were also plentiful. Twenty-five turtles were found under one tree, and the ship landed many of the crew to obtain provisions. Some fish as large as salmon were caught. The water-casks were filled from a crystal stream which murmured on its way in the shadow of leafy trees. They discovered a board inscribed,

* Three islands, discovered by the Portuguese navigator Mascarenhas in 1545,—Bourbon, Mauritius, and Rodriguez,—formerly bore this name. The one to which reference is made in the text must have been Rodriguez, in lat. 19° 30' S., and long. 63° 50' E.

in rude characters, with a legend to the effect that Captain Manto Black had visited the spot, with a squadron of thirteen vessels, and had lost all his boats in the surf. Eels so abounded on the sandy shore that the sailors caught them in their shirts instead of nets. In the morning the turtles came up out of the sea to scrape a hollow in the sand, where they



TURTLE.

might lay their eggs to be hatched in the sun. The young were observed crawling about, after they had left their nests, not much bigger than nuts. Well provided with agreeable food, the seamen found a not less agreeable liquor in the juice of the palm-tree. It may well be supposed that they enjoyed their residence in this island-Eden, and that the sick were rapidly restored to health. But life cannot be spent in romantic glades and on the shores of sunny seas; there is work to be done in less Arcadian haunts. The crew, all except seven men, rejoined their vessel, and these, as soon as she was quite ready to sail, were forced to embark. Then

they made for the Mauritius ; but stretching too far away to windward to fall in with it, they contented themselves with a visit to St. Mary's Island, lying off the Bay of Antongil, in the island of Madagascar.

As soon as the natives caught sight of the stranger-ship, they put off in canoes, laden with live-stock and fruits ; but the supply being insufficient, the captain set out in the long-boat for Madagascar in the hope of adding to his stores. He was disappointed, however ; finding neither man, beast, nor vegetables.

After a short stay they resumed their voyage. On the 17th of November they reached the Strait of Malacca, in about $50^{\circ} 30'$ south latitude. The ship was careering merrily before a favourable wind, when the terrible cry of "Fire !" was raised, and on hastening below deck, the captain found the steward hastily pouring water into a cask, in which, he said, the fire was raging. It appeared that, with a light in his hand, he had gone down into the hold to fill a keg of brandy, that he might distribute among the crew their morning drams. A spark had fallen into the bung-hole of the cask. The water had temporarily suppressed but not quite extinguished the fire, which, raging within the barrel, soon blew out both ends of it. The blazing spirits, as they flowed along, set fire to a neighbouring heap of coals. All hands were then summoned to render their assistance ; but they made no progress in subduing the flames, as four tiers of casks were ranged one above the other. The men as they worked were almost suffocated by the sulphureous vapours of the incandescent coals, and could scarcely reach the hatchways to inhale a breath of fresh air. The captain would fain have flung the powder overboard, but the supercargo would not allow it, foolishly protesting that the fire could be easily subdued, and that, if they lost their powder, they had no means

of repelling any hostile attack. But the flames still raged most furiously. As a last resource, the decks were scuttled, and the water poured in abundantly; but this attempt was also unsuccessful.

Some of the crew now broke loose from all the bonds of discipline. They saw their ship enveloped in flames, and around them nothing but sea and sky. How should they escape? The launch and cutter were hastily lowered, and soon were filled with terrified seamen, until their gun-wales were almost level with the waves. The supercargo hailed them from the ship. They replied that they were determined to cast off from the blazing hulk, and that if he wished to save himself he must descend the stern-ladder and join them without delay. He begged of them to wait for their captain. They refused, cut the painter, and dropped slowly behind the doomed ship. All this while Captain Boutekoe had laboured most earnestly to subdue the flames. A seaman came to him, and with tears on his sunburned cheeks exclaimed, "We are abandoned; the launch and cutter have deserted us." The captain hastened on deck, and crowded on all sail to overtake the boats; but when she had arrived within a short distance, the boats got to windward and escaped.

As their only chance of safety, the captain and those who remained on board—being a majority of the crew—laboured still to subdue the flames. It was impossible to throw over-board the powder; for the fire being at the bottom of the hold, none could reach it. Holes were bored in the vessel's broadside to let in the water. Buckets were incessantly emptied down the hatchways, and it is possible their exertions might have proved successful, had not some barrels of oil ignited. Such an outbreak of flame and fire then took place, that the most sanguine abandoned all hope of safety. Every

countenance was pale with despair, and men laid themselves down on the deck in the coolness of utter apathy to await the terrible death which they knew to be close at hand.

At length the flames reached the gunpowder. In a moment one hundred and nineteen human beings were hurled



LOSS OF THE "NEW HORN."

into the air, headless, dismembered—a horrid and ghastly spectacle! And mingled with their torn and bleeding remains, which retained scarcely any resemblance to those of man made in God's image, were the blackened timbers,

splinters, and fragments of the wreck. A similar scene has been powerfully painted by Byron :—

“Up to the sky like rockets go
All that mingled there below :
Many a tall and goodly man,
Scorched and shrivelled to a span,
When he fell to ‘the sea’ again
Like a cinder strewed its plain :
Down the ashes shower like rain ;...
Not the matrons that them bore
Could discern their offspring more ;
That one moment left no trace
More of human form or face
Save a scattered scalp or bone.”

What followed after this terrible explosion has been narrated by the captain, Boutekoe :—

“Although stunned by the shock, I did not entirely lose sensation, and some few sparks of life and resolution still glowed in my heart. So, on falling back into the water near the wreck of a goodly vessel now shivered into a thousand fragments, I took a little breath, and gazing around me, I descried the main-mast and fore-mast floating within my reach. I gained the former, and while musing on my desperate situation, I observed a young man emerging from the troubled waters, and swimming to a part of the vessel, he cried out, ‘I have got it!’ ‘What!’ I said to myself, ‘does any one survive?’ A yard drifted towards him, and the mast of which I had hold not being steady enough, I bade him push it a little nearer me, that I might secure myself on it and join him. I did so ; but as I had two wounds on my head, and severe bruises on my back, I entertained but little hope of surviving beyond a few hours.

“Thus we two, being seated together, held each a plank in his hand—part of the wreck of the foremast ; and my companion lifted himself up, to see if the long-boat were anywhere visible. After a while he caught sight of her, but at so

great a distance that he could not make out whether her head or stern were foremost. At this period the sun went down, to our great affliction. We felt ourselves destitute of all prospect of succour, and our only consolation lay in committing our souls and bodies to the mercy of God. After doing so, with all humility and reverence, we were agreeably surprised to see both the launch and the cutter approach us. I cried out to them to save their captain. They asked with wonder, Was I still alive? On my assuring them of the truth, my young companion leapt boldly into the water and swam to the boat; but my wounds precluded me from following his example, and I asked them to come nearer if they were willing to save me. They threw me a rope, which I fastened about my body, and being drawn towards them, I was hauled into the boat. Some time before I had made a small place in the stern of this same boat where two men could easily lie, and I now betook myself thither to repose, as I thought I was on the brink of death. Heyn Roc, the supercargo, and the others soon came to see me, when I bade them row about in the neighbourhood of the wreck and endeavour to save some provisions, and also to recover one or two of the compasses; but they informed me that just before the destruction of the ship the pilot had removed the compass from the binnacle.

“While I was in this condition, the supercargo made the men row all night, as if he expected to find land; but in the morning none was visible. They came to ask my advice. I told them we ought to have remained near the wreck, when we could have saved an abundance of provisions. They carried me out of the little cabin in which I had been reposing, and I made them bring before me their supplies of food—a couple of little casks, containing seven or eight pounds of biscuits.

“ ‘Comrades !’ I exclaimed, ‘ we must adopt another plan ; lay aside your oars, or your strength will soon be spent.’ ”

“ ‘What shall we do then ?’ said they.

“ ‘Take your shirts,’ I answered, ‘and convert them into sails.’ ”

“I told them to untwist the cordage and run it through the linen. When I proffered my own shirt for the same purpose, they refused it, as being essential to my safety in my feeble health.

“In the launch forty-six of us were crowded, and in the cutter twenty-six. A dressing-gown and pillow which had been flung into the latter were handed in for my use. Our surgeon was among the saved, but having no medicines, he could apply only chewed bread to my wounds ; this simple application, however, proved of great service.

“We drifted the whole day, and at night hoisted our sails, steering by the guidance of the stars. The night was exceedingly cold, but the day was quite as hot, the sun’s beams striking directly upon us. On the 21st and two following days we made a kind of cross-staff, by means of the cooper, who was able to draw a little, and had a pair of compasses ; next we contrived to make a quadrant. I scratched on a plank a kind of chart of Java and Sumatra, with the Strait of Sunda ; and after making the usual observations, I concluded we were about ninety miles from land. The biscuit was distributed in a daily ration of about the size of one’s finger ; but even at this rate our stock was so small that it could not last long among so many. We had nothing to drink, and our thirst became unendurable. But the sky growing heavy with clouds, we spread the sails to catch the rain and fill our casks. We made a cup out of a shoe, and I was careful that no one should drink above his allowance. The crew entreated me to drink as much as I pleased, but I

confined myself to the same quantity that was given to the rest.

“The launch was a faster sailer than the cutter, so that the latter could hardly keep up with it; and the crew of the latter, not understanding navigation, solicited me to receive them into the launch. But as in that case all must have perished, their request was refused, and the tow-rope cut. Our misery was extreme, for we were now without food, and were still a long way from land. I sought to cheer the men by assuring them they were drawing near the shore; but they murmured openly, saying, ‘The captain deceives us, and we are drifting further and further from it.’ One day, when suffering severely from hunger, God was pleased to send some sea-fowl close to our boat; we caught them, and in our voracity ate them raw. We had not enough, however, for a plentiful repast; and as there were no signs of land, our hopes again died away. The cutter’s crew once more renewed their entreaties, and as we could no longer deny them, no fewer than seventy-two souls were crowded together, destitute of meat and drink.

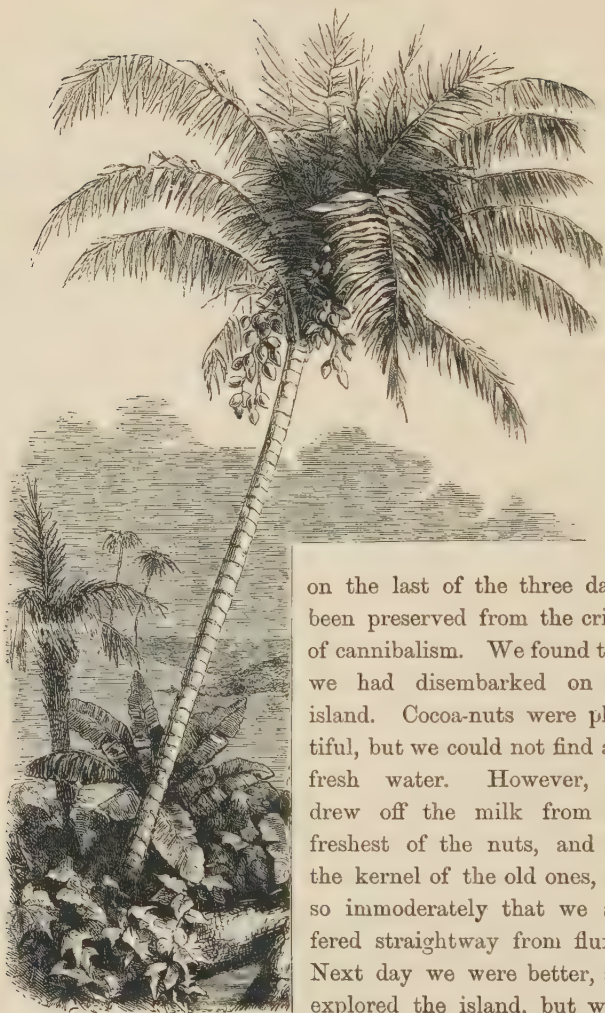
“While gazing in each other’s faces with lack-lustre eyes, a quantity of flying-fish rose from the water, and some fell within our reach: these we divided, and ate raw, to the great relief of our weakened frames, and the very salvation of our lives. It was truly wonderful, however, that no one died, for several could not be dissuaded from drinking salt water.

“Our misery daily increasing, and the violence of hunger beating down their natural instincts, our people began to regard each other with wolfish looks. Consulting among themselves, they secretly resolved to devour the boys on board; and after *this* terrible supply had failed, to draw lots who next should perish, in order that the lives of the others might be preserved.

“I find it impossible to describe the sensations I experienced on hearing of this horrid plot. When I saw some of them ready to rend the poor boys piecemeal, I earnestly prayed to God to divert their minds from such cruelty; and, approaching them, I said, ‘My friends, I know from my instruments that we are not far from land; let us put our trust in God, and he will send relief.’ They replied that I had long deluded them with predictions which had never been fulfilled, but promised they would wait yet another three days before they resorted to cannibalism. Then, indeed, I redoubled my prayers to Heaven, imploring the Almighty to save us from so terrible a crime, and to grant that our sufferings might not become heavier than we could bear, but that he would guide us quickly into a haven of safety.

“So we went on our way until the 2nd of December, the thirteenth day of our agony. Then the sky lowered grimly with dense masses of cloud, and the rain falling, we filled two of our water-casks. All our men had given up their shirts for sails, and having left the vessel in great haste, they were almost naked. Therefore they crowded close together, to increase their natural heat. At that time I was at the helm, looking out wistfully for the outline of some pleasant shore; but feeling quite benumbed, I called for the quartermaster to take my place, while I thrust myself in among the men to obtain a little warmth. He had not been at the helm an hour when the weather suddenly cleared, and he exclaimed, with a joyous shout, ‘Land! land!’ Our strength seemed all at once to be renewed; we crept from under the sails, hoisted them, and stood in for the shore, which we reached on the same day.

“The moment we landed we threw ourselves on our knees and returned thanks to Heaven; in which expression of gratitude I was not the least fervent, seeing that we had now,



COCOA-NUT TREE.

on the last of the three days, been preserved from the crime of cannibalism. We found that we had disembarked on an island. Cocoa-nuts were plentiful, but we could not find any fresh water. However, we drew off the milk from the freshest of the nuts, and ate the kernel of the old ones, but so immoderately that we suffered straightway from fluxes. Next day we were better, and explored the island, but without seeing any inhabitants.

“Laying in a goodly store of cocoa-nuts, we again made

sail, and on the following day came in sight of Sumatra, about fifteen miles distant. So long as our nuts lasted, we sailed along the coast eastward ; but at length the failure of our supply compelled us to attempt a disembarkation. This was no easy task, owing to the violence of the surf ; but four or five of the seamen ventured to swim ashore, and after traversing the beach for some time, they discovered the mouth of a river, and signed to us to follow. On arriving at the spot, we found that the entrance was obstructed by a dangerous bar ; but we determined to cross, and by taking suitable precautions we effected the passage, and soon afterwards landed in safety."

Here the Dutchmen found fresh water, and beans growing among the grass ; while at a short distance from the landing-place some tobacco lay beside the lingering embers of a fire. As these were proofs that the place was inhabited, they kindled five or six fires, and posting sentinels in every direction, so as to prevent a surprise, they went to sleep and smoked by turns. In the darkness the natives stole upon them, designing to massacre them ; but the sentinels detected their approach, and gave an alarm. The captain, though his men had only a rusty sword and a couple of hatchets, drew them up in array, each carrying a lighted torch in his hand. They then charged the enemy, who, alarmed by the unusual spectacle, and ignorant whether the Dutchmen were armed or not, took to flight. The Dutchmen returned to their fires, and passed the rest of the night undisturbed.

At daybreak three men were seen on the beach ; whereupon three of the sailors, who knew something of the Malay tongue, went towards them. They agreed to traffic with the crew. On asking whether the Dutch had arms, they were prudently answered in the affirmative ; and, moreover, were assured that a great quantity of warlike stores was on board

the launch. The falsity of the assertion they could not detect, as the launch was covered in with the sails.

Having bought some poultry and boiled rice of the natives, they enjoyed what, after their past privations, might justly be called a luxurious banquet. To their inquiries about the position of the place where they had landed, the islanders replied by pointing to leeward, as if to say that Java lay in that direction; and they also repeated the words "Jan Koen," which the Dutch knew to be the Governor of Java's name. On one occasion the natives seemed to have made ready to attack them, but the captain raised his voice and began to sing a psalm, so loudly that the banks of the river resounded with his voice. We are told that at this outburst the savages laughed immoderately; and it is conceivable that to hear an old sea-captain, with a voice rough as the winds he had baffled for many years, droning out as loudly as his lungs would permit him the harsh cadences of a dull Dutch psalm, was well calculated to move one's risible faculties.

Next morning the Dutchmen purchased a buffalo, and were preparing to convey it to their launch, when a body of three hundred natives swept down upon them, armed with swords and bucklers. The affray that ensued was desperate and bloody. The Dutchmen fought with all the courage of their race, though, with the exception of the two hatchets and the rusty sword, they had no weapons but sticks. The ship's baker wielded the sword with wonderful effect, but towards the end of the conflict was wounded in the stomach by a poisoned lance, and speedily died.

At length the Dutchmen got on board their launch, and put out to sea, when it was found that sixteen of their number were missing; twelve had been killed, and four were left ashore.

A storm came on, and the survivors were sorely tried by

hunger, but in three or four days they came in sight of the extremity of Java. Here they fell in with a fleet of twenty-three vessels. One of them sent out a boat, whose crew our wanderers recognized, having sailed from the Texel together, and been separated, as we have said, off the Canaries. They were then received, with a truly hearty welcome, on board the *Virgin*, of Dordrecht.

III.

LOSS OF THE "WAGER."

May 1741.



THE *Wager* was one of the ships composing the fleet which, under Commodore (afterwards Lord) Anson, was despatched, in 1740, on an expedition to the South Seas. Her first commander was Captain Murray, but in the course of the voyage he was promoted to the *Pearl* frigate, and was succeeded on board the *Wager* by Captain Cheap. The *Wager* lost sight of the Commodore on the 19th of April 1741; and on the 14th of May following was wrecked on a desolate island in latitude 47° S. and longitude $81^{\circ} 40'$ W. The narrative of the adventures of her captain, the Hon. Mr. Byron (an ancestor of the poet*), Lieutenant Hamilton, Alexander Campbell (a midshipman), and others, written by the said midshipman, is full of extraordinary interest, and I have therefore been induced to include it among my "old stories re-told."

At the time the ship struck, Captain Cheap was suffering from a dislocated shoulder, which prevented him from taking active command, and by his presence enforcing discipline

* Lord Byron has made great use of his ancestor's experiences in his poem of "Don Juan."

among the crew. Campbell, the midshipman, finding that the ship had been driven into a narrow pass between two rocks, and could neither sink nor swim, repaired to the captain, and asked him if he would go ashore, as he thought she would break up very soon. "Go, and save all the sick," replied Captain Cheap, "and don't mind me." He also gave orders for hoisting the boats out; whereupon the men were immediately employed in collecting things necessary for their preservation. The yawl went ashore first, but was quickly followed by the barge and cutter.

Unfortunately, from the very first the crew of the *Wager* manifested a mutinous and disorderly spirit. They paid no attention to the directions of their officers, who represented to them the necessity of going back to the ship and collecting the stores and provisions indispensable for the support of every man on a desolate island. However, Campbell and some of the petty officers went back in the yawl, and persuaded the captain to go ashore. There were two or three huts on the island, built by the Indians, who, it appears, would frequently land, and stay several days. One of these was set apart for the captain; and fortunate was it for him that any habitation could be had. Otherwise, in his distressed condition, he would certainly have lost his life.

"As soon," says Campbell, "as the captain got into this hut, he ordered me to take the yawl, and see if the men on board would come ashore. Accordingly I went, but found them all in such confusion as cannot be imagined by any who were not eye-witnesses of it. Some were singing psalms, others fighting, others swearing, and some lay drunk on the deck. Seeing them in this strange disorder, I spoke not a word to anybody; but observing some casks of ball and powder on the quarter-deck, I began to put them into the boat, whereupon two of the men came to me, crying out, 'You shall not have them,

for the ship is lost, and all is ours !' A third came with a bayonet, swearing he would kill me ; adding these words, ' You have carried a strait arm all the voyage, and you shall suffer for it !' and with that he threw the bayonet at me, but missed his mark, and I immediately got into the yawl and returned to the shore.

" About the middle of the ensuing night, when the wind and tide together made a great sea, and the ship was violently working, the people on board began to be afraid, expecting every moment that she would start. At last they pointed one of the guns (a four-pounder, that lay on the quarter-deck) towards the captain's hut, and had like to have hit it ; which, if they had, it must have infallibly been beat to pieces, and might have proved fatal to those within. The captain not liking that they should send cannon-balls on messages to him, ordered me and three others of the petty officers to fetch the people from on board. But it was now impossible for us to get on board, by reason of the mast that lay alongside, and a great sea ; so we went back, and informed the captain of these impediments. ' I cannot help it,' replied he, ' but should be very glad if they were all safe on shore.' So these people were left some time longer on board, to continue their outrageous disorders. Some of them broke open the lazaretto, where the wine was stowed, scuttled the pipes, made themselves drunk ; and several tumbled from the ship into the water, and were drowned, *which was more owing to the liquor within than without*. Others broke open the chests and cabins, and loaded themselves with plunder, which, however, they were soon forced to relinquish."

Another attempt was made next day to bring the unruly crew on shore, but when the petty officers called for hands to row the boat off to the ship, none would go until they resorted to compulsory measures ; and the effect of these was to en-

courage a secret spirit of mutiny and desperation. The captain took every precaution he could think of to prevent this spirit from manifesting itself by deeds. As the seamen landed, they were disarmed ; and a bell-tent was erected, in which the arms and ammunition were deposited. But this device was of little service, for the men went on board under the cover of night, and refurnished themselves with both, so that they were soon in a position to treat their officers with defiance. Thus, the ship being hopelessly lost, the island was soon in a state of anarchy and confusion,—without laws and without a head,—and this lasted until a part of the mutineers went off in the long-boat.

Abandoned by the long-boat, and having but a small stock of provisions for their future subsistence, the prospect of those left behind was wretched enough. They were twenty in number ; namely :—

Captain Cheap ; Lieutenant Hamilton, Royal Marines ; William Harvey, quartermaster ; Walter Elliot, surgeon ; Hon. John Byron, midshipman ; Alexander Campbell, midshipman ; — Ross, midshipman ; — Noble, midshipman ; Peter Plastow, captain's steward ; David Bulkeley, second gunner ; John Bosman, able-bodied seaman ; Dennis O'Lara, able-bodied seaman ; John Ridwood, boatswain's yeoman ; — Crosslet, corporal of marines ; Hales, Hereford, Smith, Chirch, Desmond, and Creswick, all seamen.

Their two boats, the barge and yawl, stood in urgent need of repair, and the first work of the castaways was to render them seaworthy. For this purpose every man turned carpenter. Nor did Captain Cheap himself, though still an invalid, look on in listless languor. All that his strength permitted him to do, he did. He went about in quest of wood and water, made fires, and astonished himself and all his company by his successful experiments in cooking. A slough-cake of his making was much esteemed. Here is the recipe : water

and flour, made into a batter, and mixed with a small seaweed, called the *slough*, which grows on rocks below high-water mark ; the whole being fried with pork-slush !

Throughout the month of November the weather was so bad that they could get no shell-fish, on which rested their chief dependence for subsistence. And when the captain's private stock of provisions was exhausted, they lived wholly upon *slough fried with tallow-candles*. No wonder they became so weak as scarcely to be able to draw their limbs along !

At length two Indian canoes visited the island ; but they brought only a few dogs, some of which the castaways killed and ate. The extreme inclemency of the weather added to their misfortune ; because the Indians could neither catch seals nor dive for mussels, which was all they had to live upon. Next day they quitted the island, and our Englishmen saw no more of them for a month afterwards. They lived, therefore, on the brink of starvation ; their food mainly consisting of the few sea-fowl they were able to shoot, when they went out in the yawl for that purpose.

Soon after the Indians left, three of the company could not resist the temptation of breaking open the captain's store-tent, in which he had saved some flour for their contemplated expedition to Juan Fernandez,* —the rendezvous appointed by Commodore Anson for his fleet. A portion of this flour was carried off by the three men who broke open the tent, and who were discovered by the marks it left in their own hut. They were Peter Plastow, John Ridwood, and Rowland Creswick. The captain ordered them to be confined in another hut until they confessed their guilt, which they soon did ; but in the night Plastow made his escape into the

* This was the scene of the adventures of Alexander Selkirk. or Selcraig, whose story suggested Defoe's "Robinson Crusoe."

woods. On the following day, Ridwood and Creswick were bound to a tree, severely flogged, and ordered off to an adjacent islet, called Long Island ; but Creswick escaping, Ridwood was sent thither alone in the barge, and left upon the sea-bound rock, where he miserably perished.

Surely the justice of the case would have been met by a more lenient punishment !

The third of December proving a fine day, and a warm wind blowing up from the south, Campbell was despatched to the wreck to see if he could light upon any "treasure-trove." He was fortunate enough to find three casks of "very fine beef." When he returned ashore, the captain ordered him to serve out an equal portion to every man ; and the new-found abundance of wholesome provision restored their spirits, revived their energies, and recruited their bodily strength.

"Our method of cooking," says Campbell, "and the manner in which we ate our beef, was this :—We fried the fat with slough and other sea-weed ; and this composition served us for bread to our meat. There grows upon this island a sort of wild purslane, which we boiled, and this for some time served us for cabbage to our beef. But as it had a very bad effect upon us, purging us to a most desperate degree, we were obliged to leave it off ; though this herb was our only resource in bad weather, when we could get no shell-fish."

At length the people began to grow impatient for their departure from this desolate and inhospitable island ; and on the 15th of December, the wind proving fair for running out to sea, the captain yielded a reluctant assent. He knew better than his companions the dangers of a long boat-voyage at that period of the year. However, the two boats were got ready, and such small supplies of provision as remained were put on board of them, and the men embarked,—the captain, the Honourable Mr. Byron, and the surgeon, in the barge,

with eight men to row; Mr. Hamilton and Campbell the midshipman in the yawl, with six men to row.

"We had not sailed," continues Campbell, "above an hour and a half, when it began to blow hard, and the wind shifted more to the westward, so that we were obliged to bear away right before it. The seas were now so rough, that we every instant expected to go to the bottom; to avoid which, as far as lay in our power, we flung overboard almost everything we had—even our beef which we had taken from the wreck, notwithstanding we knew not where to get a bit more to save us from perishing with hunger, the most miserable of all deaths. But this we did to avoid an immediate death, though of a less shocking nature—trusting to God for our future preservation. Our situation was the more desperate, as we were running (we knew not whither) on a lee-shore, in two open boats, with a terrible gale of wind, a great sea, and night coming on. Mr. Hamilton and I were obliged to set our backs against the stern of the vessel to keep the sea out of her, though we did not think anything less than a miracle could preserve us from destruction.

"We did not all this time see the barge, the sea running so high: in short, it is impossible to conceive how a boat could live in such weather. But it pleased God, as we advanced on the lee-shore, looking every moment when we should strike against the rocks, and whilst every man was preparing for another world as well as he could, we saw an opening in the rock, which we stood for, and found an inlet through the mountains, but so narrow that we could hardly row with our oars. The minute we entered this inlet, we found ourselves in a perfect calm, and were therefore obliged to row. Soon after, through the providence of the Almighty, the barge came to the same place. None but those who have been in the like circumstances can conceive our joy at so

happy a meeting, after such dreadful dangers past. But, alas !” adds Mr. Campbell, “ this was only a shadow or type of what we were yet to experience.”

Captain Cheap and his companions discovered many inlets among the labyrinth of mountain-islands they were now engaged in traversing ; but, as they had no compass, they durst not attempt their passage. And these sea-girt peaks were of such height, and so encompassed them on every side, that they could not so much as see the sun to steer by.

They had not proceeded far up the channel we have just spoken of, before they landed, and went in search of a place where a fire could be lighted. But the rocks rose sheer and abrupt from the water’s edge, and it was with great difficulty they discovered one. At last they came upon a kind of natural cavity or hollow, where they lay all night ; the hard rock their couch, and the cold heavens above their only canopy. If their condition on Wager Island was bad, here it was infinitely worse. *There* they found or erected huts which sheltered them from the rigour of the weather ; *here* they had “ no other house than the wide world.” And the weather was so terribly severe, the frost so extreme, that by morning several of them were almost dead. They awakened early ; and the captain, perceiving that both wind and sea were more auspicious, ordered every man to the boats, and again they resumed their miserable voyage.

In the evening the sea rose again with a tremendous swell, and the lonely voyagers rowed in among small islands to obtain a little shelter. The accommodation they found was, however, very indifferent, for the islands were all low, with a swampy soil. Rain was falling heavily, and the captain ordered the main-sail of the barge to be brought on shore and rigged up as a tent ; but it did not prove of any particular



"THE HARD ROCK THEIR COUCH."

service. Most of the crew stationed themselves, however, under this rude protection ; and kindling a huge fire, dried their clothing on one side, while the rain continued to wet it on the other. They discovered here the weed which English dwellers by the sea call *tangle*,* and were glad to use it as a means of satisfying their hunger.

The next day — rain, rain, rain ! The crew were scattered over the island in quest of food, except two of the marines, who lay still in their wigwam. On Campbell going to see after them, he found them lying in mud and water, and almost dead with cold. He roused them up immediately, and despatched them to seek subsistence for themselves.

* The botanical name is *Laminaria digitata*

They remained on this islet for three days, being prevented from putting to sea by the continued severity of the weather. The bay in which they had landed they called very appropriately Swamp Bay. On quitting the place, they steered in a northerly direction to the other side of the bay, and discovered an opening between the mainland and a low cape or promontory which they conjectured to be an island. Always anxious to keep as far from the coast as possible, they made for this opening, which turned out to be a noble bay with no other outlet.

On the following day the wind blew from the south-west ; and they, as near as they could judge, bore away rapidly on a north-east course. The land ahead was very lofty, and between it and the mountains opened up a channel, for which they steered. The captain ordered Campbell to forge ahead with the yawl, to reconnoitre the supposed passage ; and that industrious officer discovered an island, which, with true North British patriotism, he named after the Duke of Montrose. Here they landed, and lighted a fire on the stony beach, and cooked their supper.

The next morning, with a fair wind behind and a bright sky above them, they kept on their way ; and so for a couple of days they continued, landing at night wherever they could find a convenient place. On Christmas-day, 1741, they weighed anchor in the morning, and kept along the coast to a conspicuous headland, where at noon they disembarked, enjoyed a Christmas dinner off tangle, and drank the health of King George the Second in "Adam's wine." In the evening they opened out a fine sandy bay, which, thinking it would be a good landing-place, they steered for ; but on nearer approach they discovered their mistake, and were driven ashore by the rolling breakers. They all got out of the yawl, with the intention of relaunching her ; but the next sea filled her full,

and drove her upon the beach. Being unable to launch her in this condition, they took everything out of her, and then got her afloat. But they themselves were but a sorry spectacle, their tattered clothes dripping with sea-water. They rowed up to the barge, in the hope that its crew would offer them a dry shirt or a pair of stockings, but were met with a cold repulse.

Next day both boats weighed anchor, but the inclemency of the weather prevented them from putting to sea. They rowed down the bay in hopes of finding something to eat ; but not succeeding, they returned to the place where they slept on the preceding night, and going ashore, they found some shell-fish and tangle.

On the following morning they weighed, with the intention of doubling the cape, which was the last they could see, and promised and proved to be the worst. Sailing along shore, they doubled one of the headlands ; but the wind blowing extremely hard, they were compelled to put back for the bay, and forced to lie all night upon their oars. The weather next day proved just as bad. They laid up their boats, and all hands were employed in looking for provisions, of which, however, they found but little : the sea-weeds called *slough* and *tangle* were all the victuals they could get.

They were detained here some time by the bad weather ; and being driven up to the head of the bay in search of provisions, they fell in with some spacious lagoons, where seals and mussels abounded. Accordingly, they gathered a sufficient stock to last while they endeavoured to double the cape, with the view of steering northward. This cape is known to the Spaniards as Cape Tres Montes, because it consists of three peaks of equal height, whose buttresses are washed by the sea-waters.

On coming to the first of these headlands, they found the

wind blowing right in their teeth. Thereupon they took down their masts, and applied themselves to their oars until they had doubled the second spur. Here, says the chronicler, the wind and tide ran so strong as to make a sea worse than the Race of Portland ; and night coming on, and no harbour being available, they were driven back to their former bay.

Next day the weather once more proved their enemy ; and all hands went ashore to collect provisions, except two men left in each boat to take care of it. They killed a young seal and dressed it for dinner ; the verdict of those who banqueted upon it being, that its flesh was superior to any lamb they had ever tasted. After this sumptuous repast, Hamilton and Campbell went out with their guns to see if they could shoot anything. They took each a different direction ; and as Campbell returned from his expedition, he saw the boats riding at a grapnel. But suddenly the wind veered right round from north to south, pouring a tremendous roll of billows into the bay ; and the tossing waters, leaping around and about the boats, filled the yawl and sunk her. The two men in her were marines : one of them was drowned, but Campbell saved the other by hauling him ashore.

The loss of the yawl was a signal misfortune, the captain and all who had been accustomed to man her losing their clothes and arms. As the barge was incapable of carrying her own crew and the captain's company, it was determined to leave four of the marines upon this desolate island. The decision seems to have been unavoidable, and yet it must strike every reader as terribly cruel. The marines were chosen because they were of no service on board the boat. But their fate was most wretched, and the necessity which compelled it most miserable ; the island being destitute of seal, shell-fish, and every kind of food. We are told that the captain left them arms, ammunition, a frying-pan, and several

other necessities ; but it would have been more humane to have shot them outright.

“ This dismal affair concluded,” says Campbell, “ the rest of us went with the barge to try the aforesaid cape again ; and when we departed the four poor wretches stood on the beach, gave three cheers, and cried, ‘ God bless the king ! ’ Our hearts melted with compassion for them ; but there was no helping their misfortune. Their names were Smith, Hales, Hereford, and Corporal Crosslet.”

A third time they tried the cape, but not with the success which proverbially attends a third attempt. The wind blew always from the north to the west, and the sea heaved and boiled so violently that it was impossible for any open boat to live in it. They were therefore compelled to return to Marines’ Bay—as they called it, on account of the four castaways they had left there.

Six weeks had passed since they left Wager Island ; and throughout this long and dreary period the chief subsistence of the castaways had been sea-weed and shell-fish. The loss of the yawl had proved to be a signal disaster, as its crew were thus deprived of all change of clothing. And to take but one example, Campbell the midshipman was reduced to an old shirt, a pair of cloth breeches, a waistcoat, and an old hat : he had neither shoe nor stocking.

On the 29th of January some of the crew protested against any fresh attempt to double the formidable cape, which had proved the *ne plus ultra* of their enterprise. They insisted on returning to Wager Island. Others would fain have abandoned the barge, and ventured on the dangerous experiment of crossing the American continent. At last it was resolved that they should return to Wager Island. Not that they had any hope of ever revisiting their native country ; all they

expected was to die at Wager Island, which, from their long residence upon it, they had come to regard as a kind of home.

Before setting out they killed some seal for their voyage. As they passed the islet where they had abandoned the four marines, they resolved to fetch them off; considering that, if the boat sunk, they would but be released from a life which was too wretched to endure. But the unfortunate castaways were not to be found. The only traces of them were a musket and their ammunition.

The fifth day of their voyage they made for Montrose Island, but, owing to contrary winds, did not reach it until the night of the sixth day. They hailed it as a kind of Eden; for besides shell-fish and sea-weed, it offered a black berry, growing on a thorny bush, and tasting like a gooseberry. They found here a small Indian canoe, which proved of great service to them. They put two hands into her, and towed her astern of the barge.

At length they made Wager Island, and gladly sailed into Cheap's Bay.

"We were all," says Campbell, "in a starved condition, having ate nothing for three days but tangle and other sea-weed. After landing we moored the barge with her grappling to the sea, and stern fast to the land. Going up to the huts which we left two months before, we found one of them nailed up, and were obliged to break open the door to get in. It appeared that the Indians had been there by the things that were in the hut, particularly a quantity of iron, and other materials which we knew they had taken from the wreck of our unfortunate ship. As the Indians hereabout know nothing of iron,* and set no value on it, we conjectured that those who had been here traded with the Spaniards.

* The reader must remember this was written about one hundred and thirty years ago

“ We found some seal among the bushes, which the Indians had thrown aside ; and you may be sure it furnished us with a very welcome repast.”

On the fifteenth day after their return, a party of the Chono Indians visited the island in a couple of canoes. One of them—a cacique or chief, who had been confirmed in his rank by the Spaniards, and spoke the Spanish tongue—conversed with Mr. Elliot, the surgeon, and was bribed into an agreement to conduct the castaways to the nearest Spanish settlement. Accordingly, they embarked on board their barge to the number of fifteen, including the cacique, whose name was Martin, and his servant Emanuel. They had counted sixteen on their return from their last fruitless attempt to quit the island ; but in the interval they had buried two, who had perished of hunger, while a marine, having committed theft, betook himself to the woods to escape punishment, and was never more heard of.

“ The first night,” says Byron, “ we lay at an island destitute of all refreshment, where, having found some shelter for our boat, and made ourselves a fire, we slept by it. The next night we were more unfortunate, though our wants were increasing ; for having run to the westward of Montrose Island, we found no shelter for the barge, but were under the necessity of lying upon our oars, suffering the most extreme pangs of hunger. The next day brought us to the bottom of a great bay, where the Indian guide had left his family—a wife and two children—in a hut. Here we stayed two or three days, during which we were constantly employed in ranging along shore in quest of shell-fish.”

They now again continued on their voyage, having received on board the family of their guide, who conducted them to a river with a current so strong and rapid that they spent a whole day in vain attempts to stem it. Byron had hitherto

steered the boat ; but one of the men sinking from fatigue, and expiring, he was compelled to take an oar. Another of the common seamen—John Bosman—who had been regarded as their most stalwart man, fell from his seat under the thwarts, complaining that his strength was quite exhausted for want of food, and that he could not hold out much longer. As he lay in this miserable condition, he broke out now and again into pitiful requests for some little sustenance ; two or three mouthfuls, he said, might save his life. “The captain at this time,” says Byron, “had a large piece of boiled seal by him, and was the only one provided with anything like a meal ; but we were become so hardened against the impressions of others’ sufferings by our own, so familiarized to scenes of misery, that the poor man’s dying entreaties were in vain. I sat next to him when he dropped, and having a few dried shell-fish (about five or six) in my pocket, from time to time put one in his mouth, which served only to prolong his pains ; from which, however, soon after my little supply failed, he was released by death.

“It would have redounded greatly to the tenderness and humanity of Captain Cheap,” says Byron, “if at this time he had remitted somewhat of that attention he showed to self-preservation, which is hardly allowable but where the consequence of relieving others must be immediately and manifestly fatal to ourselves. But I would venture to affirm that, in these last affecting exigencies, as well as some others, a sparing perhaps adequate to the emergency might have been admitted consistently with a due regard to his own necessities. The captain had better opportunities for recruiting his stock than any of us, for his rank was considered by the Indian as a reason for supplying him when he could not find a bit for us. Upon the evening of the day on which these disasters happened, the captain, producing a large piece of boiled seal,

suffered no one to partake with him but the surgeon, who was the only man in favour at this time. We did not expect from him, indeed, any relief in our present condition, for we had a few small mussels and herbs to eat ; but the men could not help expressing the greatest indignation at his neglect of the deceased, saying that he deserved to be deserted by the rest for his savage behaviour."

The castaways were now skirting a most inhospitable and dreary shore, which civilization has always shunned. The constant heavy rains render agriculture impracticable ; and commerce can never be favourably carried on where a vast sea, and the boiling surf driven by westerly gales upon the rocky shore, render navigation not only difficult but dangerous. Inland, the country is overgrown with dense and inter-tangled woods, which flourish in the midst of deep morasses. Nature here presents to the wanderer a stern and forbidding face ; and in such a region it would seem as if man could never rise above the wretched condition of the savage.

The cacique, with his family, now set out in search of seal ; while the crew of the *Wager*, accompanied by the cacique's servant, hunted everywhere for a little food. After exploring the wilderness for some time with little success, they began to think of regaining the barge ; but six of the men, with the Indian, having advanced some few paces ahead of the officers, hastily scrambled into the boat, and pushing off, abandoned them on that savage shore.

" And now," says Byron, with pathetic but simple earnestness, " all the difficulties we had hitherto endured seemed light in comparison with what we expected to suffer from this cruel treachery." With the boat had gone everything that might have been the means of preserving their lives. The few clothes they had saved from the wreck, and their muskets and ammunition,—all were gone. They had with them only

a little powder, which would be useful for kindling fires ; and Byron's gun, which was of no service without ammunition. Yet their future safety, all unknown to them, lay in their present danger. They at that time little suspected that the barge, on which they based all their hopes of escape, would certainly have proved the fatal means of detaining them until they were spent by the labour and hardship requisite to row her round the capes and great headlands. It was true that as they then were no condition could seem more hopeless. A stormy sea was rolling with great fury upon the coast ; and how could they hope to escape from a region which was cursed with the dreariest sterility ? But it is always the darkest just before the coming of the dawn ; and while they were sunk in despair and distress of mind, the Indian cacique's canoe was descried making towards the shore, and soon afterwards put into a small cove which a rocky ledge sheltered from the violence of the billows. A day or two later Emanuel, the cacique's servant, made his appearance, having contrived to escape from the barge and return along the shore by ways that were impassable except to an Indian.

Byron and Captain Cheap now accompanied the cacique to an Indian village for the purpose of procuring additional assistance, and having been successful, rejoined their comrades ; and about the middle of March the whole company set out on their difficult expedition. The first day the canoes made but little progress, and Mr. Elliot, the surgeon, died. The second day they rested. On the third they again put to sea, crossed the great bay to which we have already alluded, and made for the westward along a low and sandy shore. Entering a broad lagoon-like river, they rowed up it for four or five leagues, and then struck into a branch of it that took a north-easterly direction. They found the current very strong, and made but little way against it. The work was hard ; and

all the harder because they had no other sustenance than was afforded by "a sort of root, very disagreeable to the taste."

All the next day they laboured against the stream, and fared as they had done the day before.

The following day brought them to what the Canadians call a *portage*, or carrying-place. The first thing the Indians did was to remove everything from the canoes; and after hauling them ashore, they set to work to construct their wigwams. In these they passed the night, while the English had no other shelter than the branches of a tree afforded. Their sufferings at this time must have been terribly severe. Byron, for instance, had been three days at the oar with no other nourishment than a wretched, pungent, and unsatisfying root. He had no shirt, and, like his companions, he was tortured by vermin. All his clothes consisted of an old short *greko*—a garment something like a bear-skin—with a shred of a red cloth waistcoat under it, and a ragged pair of trousers. Of shoes or stockings they had none.

In the morning the Indians took to pieces their canoes—which are made of planks sewn together with the supple-jack or woodbine—and carried them across a tongue of land, through a thick swampy wood, where the path was constantly obstructed by prostrate trees and jagged stumps. Then the company embarked on a great lake, the opposite part of which seemed to wash the base of the Cordilleras.

We have said "the company;" but Byron was left behind, to wait for a second party of Indians who were on their way to join them. His experiences were so pathetic that we are unable to refrain from quoting his graphic narrative.

"I knew not," he says, "where these Indians were to come from: I was left alone upon the beach, and night was at hand. They left me not even a morsel of the stinking seal that I had suffered so much about. I kept my eyes upon the

boats as long as I could distinguish them, and then returned into the wood, and sat myself down upon the root of a tree, having ate nothing the whole day but the stem of a plant which resembles that of an artichoke, and is of a juicy consistence and acid flavour. Worn out with fatigue, I soon fell asleep; and awaking before day, I thought I heard some voices at no great distance from me. As the day appeared, looking further into the wood, I perceived a wigwam, and immediately made towards it. But the reception I experienced was by no means agreeable; for stooping to enter it, I presently received two or three kicks in my face, and at the same time heard the sound of voices seemingly in anger, which made me retire, and wait at the foot of a tree, until an old woman peeped out and made signs to me to draw near. I obeyed very readily, and went into the wigwam, which contained three men and two women. To one young man all the rest seemed to pay great respect, though he was a most miserable object, a perfect skeleton, and covered with sores from head to foot. I was happy to sit a moment by their fire, as I was quite benumbed with cold. The old woman took out a piece of seal, holding one part of it between her feet and the other end in her teeth, and then cut off some thin slices with a sharp shell, and distributed them about to the other Indians. She then put a bit upon the fire, taking a piece of fat in her mouth, chewing it, and every now and then spirting some of it on the piece that was warming upon the fire; for they never do more with it than warm it through. When it was ready she gave me a small portion, which I swallowed whole, being almost starved.

“As these Indians were strangers to me, I did not know which way they were going; and, indeed, I was now indifferent which way I went, whether to the westward or the southward, so that they would but take me with them, and

give me something to eat. However, to make them comprehend me, I pointed first to the southward and next to the lake, when they gave me to understand they were travelling northward. They all went out together, except the sick Indian, and taking up the planks of their canoe, which lay near the wigwam, carried them to the beach, and presently put them together. Then putting everything on board, they embarked, and I followed them, taking the oar."

[They rowed across the lake to the mouth of a rapid river, and next day went down it at a very rapid rate, assisted by the tide. Thus they reached the sea, and at low water landed upon the shore to look for shell-fish. Collecting a quantity of limpets, they again embarked.]

"I sat down to my oar, placing my hat close to me, and occasionally eating a limpet. The Indians were similarly employed, when one of them, seeing me throw the shells overboard, spoke to the rest in a violent passion; and rising, fell upon me, and seizing me by an old ragged handkerchief I wore about my neck, almost throttled me; while another took me by the legs, and was going to throw me overboard, when the old woman interfered. All this time I was entirely ignorant by what means I had given offence, till I observed that the Indians, after eating the limpets, carefully placed the shells in a heap at the bottom of the canoe. I then concluded some superstition existed about throwing these shells into the sea, my ignorance of which had very nearly cost me my life. I resolved to eat no more limpets until we landed,—which we did shortly afterwards, upon an island. I then noticed that the Indians brought all their shells on shore, and laid them above high-water mark. Here, as I was going to eat a large bunch of tempting-looking berries which I had gathered from a tree, one of the Indians snatched them out of my hand, and threw them away, making me to understand that they were

poisonous. Thus, in all probability, did these people now save my life, who, a few hours before, were going to deprive me of it for throwing away a limpet-shell."

Two days afterwards Byron joined his companions, and, along with the Indian cacique, the survivors of the unfortunate *Wager's* crew continued their journey towards the Spanish settlements. The hardships which beset them it is almost impossible to describe : certainly it is impossible for landsmen who "sit at home at ease" to form any accurate conception of them. It is recorded of Captain Cheap, that his body could be compared to nothing but an ant-hill, with thousands of ants crawling over it. For he was past attempting in the least to rid himself from the torment, as he had lost his memory and self-consciousness, recollecting neither the names of those about him nor his own name.

One day they fell in with about forty Indians, who were curiously painted, and spoke a language which seemed unfamiliar to the cacique. However, they gave them to understand that a ship had recently been seen upon that part of the coast, carrying a red flag. This was afterwards found to have been the *Anne*, one of the vessels attached to Lord Anson's expedition.

We pass over a narrow escape from destruction, through the canoe approaching too near the breakers, and land our hapless adventurers on the island of Chiloe, where they were hospitably received by the inhabitants of a small Indian village. They were taken into one of the huts, and feasted on mutton broth and cake of barley-meal. Captain Cheap was laid on a bed of sheep-skins before a large fire, and treated with all the attention his wretched state required. In the morning the Indian women gathered from far and near, each bringing with her some useful gift,—fowls, or mutton made

into broth, potatoes, eggs, or other eatables. To the famished wanderers it was as if they had been suddenly admitted into a terrestrial Eden. "We fell to work," says Byron, "as if we had eaten nothing in the night, and employed ourselves so for the best part of the day. In the evening the men filled our house, bringing with them some jars of a liquor they called *chicha*, made of barley-meal, and not very unlike our oat-ale in taste, which will intoxicate those who drink a sufficient quantity of it ; for a little has no effect. As soon as the drink was out, a fresh supply of victuals was brought in ; and in this manner we passed the whole time we remained with these hospitable Indians.

"They are a strong, well-made people," continues Byron, "extremely well-featured, both men and women, and vastly neat in their persons. The men's dress is called by them a *poncho* ; which is a square piece of cloth, generally in stripes of different colours, with a slit in the middle of it wide enough to let their heads through,—so that it hangs on their shoulders, half of it falling before, and the other half behind them. Under this they wear a short kind of flannel shirt without sleeves or neck. They have wide-kneed breeches, something like the Dutch seamen ; and on their legs a sort of knit buskins without any feet to them ; but never any shoes. Their hair is always combed very smooth, and tied very tight up in a great bunch close to the neck : some wear a very neat hat of their own making, and others go without it. The women wear a shift like the men's shirts, without sleeves ; and over it a square piece of cloth, which they fasten before with a large silver pin ; and a petticoat of different stripes. They take as much care of their hair as the men ; and both have always a kind of fillet bound very tight about the forehead, and made fast behind."

The next stage in the adventure of our friends brought

them to the quarters of the Spanish, where, as England was at that time engaged in hostilities against Spain, the hospitality they met with was of the coldest. The sufferings they had undergone produced no effect on the savage hearts of their new guardians, who treated them as prisoners, and placed them in the charge of two soldiers with drawn swords. After a day's rest, they were removed to the Spanish town of Castro, where the Corregidor, an old man, very tall, with a long cloak, a curl-less tie-wig, and an immensely long sword, received them. He does not seem to have been an ill-natured old gentleman, for he entertained them with cold ham and fowls, and provided them with quarters at the Jesuits' College. Here they enjoyed the luxury of something like a bed, and a shirt a-piece, which, though ragged, was clean.

For eight days they remained at Castro, kindly treated, but left in something very like solitude and silence. Then they were summoned to Chaco, the residence of the governor of the island. Escorted by about thirty soldiers on horseback, they set out in state, and, after a ride of eight miles, came to an estancia, or farmhouse, belonging to an old lady, who had not only a comfortable farmhouse but two handsome daughters. No doubt they were much affected by the Englishmen's story of "moving accidents by flood and field," for the old lady expressed a strong wish that they would spend a month beneath her roof. The prisoners, however, could not respond to the wish, but were compelled to move forward, and after much riding and some boating they arrived at Chaco.

The house of the governor, which they had expected to find a stately structure, from the luxuriant descriptions given by their escort, proved to be nothing more than a large thatched barn, partitioned off into several rooms. Here they

were ushered into the presence of the governor, who was sitting at a large table covered with a piece of red serge, attended by his principal officers. He received them very courteously, but not the less took good care they should remember they were prisoners. After a while, however, he relaxed his precautions, and allowed them to walk freely about the town,—of which Byron gives an entertaining description.

The inhabitants he describes as, in general, charitable and good-natured, but very ignorant, and completely governed by their priests. The women have fine complexions, and many of them are very handsome; they have good voices, which they accompany with the guitar: but they spoil their charms by their inordinate passion for smoking. The houses are poorly built and meanly furnished. The fire is lighted in the middle of the room; and as chimneys are regarded as superfluities, the smoke is allowed to escape through a small hole at each end of the roof. It is only the well-to-do people who eat wheaten bread, as but little corn is grown, and there are no mills to grind it. But the potatoes are the finest in the world, and very plentiful. These are always roasted in the ashes, then scraped, and served up at meals instead of bread. Swine are largely bred, and Chiloe supplies both Chili and Peru with hams.

The inhabitants are in no want of sheep, but are not overstocked with cows; owing, in a great measure, to their own indolence in not clearing away the woods, and securing sufficient pasture for the herds. Their trade consists in hams; hog's lard, which throughout South America is used instead of butter; cedar plants; little carved boxes, which the Spanish ladies use as receptacles for their work; and neatly-embroidered ponchos, quilts, and carpets.

On the 2nd of January 1742-3, Captain Cheap and his

companions embarked on board a Spanish vessel bound for Valparaiso. She got out to sea with some difficulty, having been driven by the strength of the tide against some sunken rocks ; so that our adventurers were a second time in danger of shipwreck. The open sea rolled in heavy billows ; and as the vessel was deeply laden, her decks were continually well washed. The captain was a Spaniard, and utterly ignorant of "sea affairs ;" the master, the boatswain, and the boatswain's mate were Frenchmen, and good seamen ; the pilot was a Mulatto ; and all the rest of the crew were Indians or Negroes. The latter were slaves, and stout fellows ; but were never suffered to go aloft, lest they should fall overboard. A humane precaution, the reader will think ; but it sprang wholly from mercenary motives, as the loss of a slave meant the loss of a certain sum of money to the owners. The Indians were active and brisk, and, all things considered, efficient seamen.

The head of the Jesuits was on board the ship as a passenger, and he and Captain Cheap were admitted into the state cabin to mess with the captain and his chaplain. The other Englishmen were compelled to "rough it" during the whole passage,—that is, when weary, they lay down upon the quarter-deck, in the open air, and slept as soundly as they could ; but this did not trouble them greatly after the experiences they had gone through. They lived well, eating with the master and boatswain, who always took their meals upon the quarter-deck, and drank brandy with them as freely as Englishmen drink beer. During the rest of the day they smoked cigars.

When they had been five days out, they made the land four or five leagues to the south of Valparaiso. Soon afterwards a calm prevailed, while a heavy swell from the west hurried them very rapidly towards the shore. They dropped

the lead several times ; but the water was so deep that they could not anchor. The Jesuit then made his appearance on the deck for the first time, having been sea-sick the whole passage. But on discovering that danger was apprehended, he went back into his cabin, and brought out the image of some saint, which he desired might be suspended in the mizzen-shrouds. This being done, he kept threatening it that, if a favourable wind did not quickly rise, he would certainly throw it over-board. As it happened, a slight air from the shore "blew up;" whereupon the Jesuit carried back his image with a triumphant air, saying he was certain we should not be long without wind, though he had given himself over as lost some time before it came.

Next morning they anchored in the port of Valparaiso.* In that port, which lies opposite the castle, ships are moored so near the land that they have generally their anchors ashore, the water close in having a depth of eight to ten fathoms ; while the storm-gusts come off the hills with so much violence, that, but for this method of securing them, the vessels would be driven out to sea.

The captain of the Spanish vessel duly waited on the commandant of the fort, and informed him that he had four English prisoners on board. They were ordered ashore in the afternoon, where they were received—these four helpless men!—by a file of soldiers, with fixed bayonets, who surrounded them, and marched them up to the fort, escorted by a noisy and numerous mob.

The governor, who was blind, asked them a few questions, and then proceeded to dilate on the strength of the fort he commanded, and particularly inquired if the prisoners had observed that all the lower battery was brass guns.

* Situated on a large bay in the Pacific, in lat $33^{\circ} 1' 56''$ S., long. $71^{\circ} 41' 45''$ W., about ninety miles from Santiago.

Immediately afterwards they were consigned to the condemned hole,—a cell with four bare walls, a heap of lime in one of the corners, and an unnecessary quantity of fleas. At the door was stationed a soldier, with his bayonet fixed, to prevent their escape; though *whither* or *how* they could have escaped would seem to be a mystery.

So great was the curiosity of the inhabitants of Valparaiso, who were not accustomed to see English prisoners, that they streamed into the prison from morn to night; much to the advantage of the soldier, who charged so much per head for admission to the novel show. In a few days Captain Cheap and Mr. Hamilton, whose rank as officers was known from their commissions, were ordered up to Santiago; but Mr. Campbell and Mr. Byron continued in their comfortless cell. "Captain Cheap," says Byron, "expressed great concern when he left us. He told me it was what he had all along dreaded, that they would separate us when we got into this country; but he assured me, if he was permitted to speak to the president, that he would never leave off soliciting him till he obtained a grant for me to be sent up to him."

After this separation Byron and Campbell fared very badly. A common soldier, whom the governor appointed to provide for them, brought them each a daily ration of a few potatoes mixed with hot water. The other soldiers of the garrison, as well as the people who crowded to see them, remarked their shameful treatment, and denounced its cruelty. The soldier replied: "The governor allows me but half a real a day for each of these men: what can I do? It is he who is to blame. For myself, I am grieved every time I bring them this scanty pittance, though I could not provide even *that* for the money he allows me."

Thenceforth they lived much better, and the soldier supplied them even with wine and fruit. When such unaccustomed

luxuries reached them, they supposed that the state of the case had been represented to the governor, and that he had increased their allowance. They were right only in the first part of their conjecture. It had been mentioned to him that it was impossible the prisoners could subsist on what he allowed, and his answer was, that for all he cared they might starve. But when this brutal speech became known in the town, every person who came to see them invariably made some little gift: even the mule-drivers would take out the tobacco-pouch in which they kept their scanty store, and press upon them half a real. All they received they would fain have given to the soldier, but he resolutely refused, telling them they might still want it; and during the remainder of their detention, which spread over several weeks, he laid aside half his daily pay to supply them, though he had a wife and six children, and could not have the faintest hope or expectation of any recompense. It is satisfactory to know, however, that, two years afterwards, Mr. Byron had the pleasure of showing his gratitude to this good Samaritan of Valparaiso.

At length an order arrived from the president for the two prisoners to be sent up to Santiago,* which is the capital of Chili, and distant from Valparaiso about ninety miles. The governor sent for one of the mule-drivers who carried large convoys regularly to Santiago, and ordered him to take charge of the prisoners. The man asked how their expenses were to be defrayed, as the journey occupied five days. The governor told him he must reimburse himself as best he could, for he could not advance a single real. However, they set out, and on the first day travelled about fourteen miles, spending the night, as is the custom of the muleteers, in the open field.

* Santiago, founded by the Spanish conqueror, Pedro de Valdivia, in 1541, is situated in a rich and beautiful plain at the foot of the Andes, lat 33° 35' S., and long. 70° 43' W.

Next morning they crossed a lofty mountain called Yapata, and then traversing a wide plain, ascended another mountain, very difficult for the mules, of which there were about one hundred in the caravan or drove, each carrying two heavy packages. The fourth night they lay upon a plain within sight of Santiago, and not more than four leagues from it.

“The next day,” says Byron, “as we moved towards the city, our master-carrier, who was naturally well-disposed, and had been very kind to us all the way upon the road, advised me very seriously not to think of remaining in Santiago, where, he said, there was nothing but extravagance, vice, and folly, but to proceed on with them as mule-driver, which, he said, I should soon be very expert at; and that they led an innocent and happy life, far preferable to any enjoyment such a great city as that before us could afford. I thanked him, and told him I was very much obliged to him, but that I would try the city first, and if I did not like it, I would accept of the offer he was so good as to make me. The thing that gave him this high opinion of me was, that as he had been so civil to us, I was very officious in assisting to drive in those mules that strayed from the rest upon those large plains we passed over; and this, I thought, was the least I could do towards making some return for the obligations we were under to him.”

On their arrival at Santiago, they were conducted before the president, Don Josef Manso, who received them courteously, and ordered them to be lodged in the same house with Captain Cheap and Mr. Hamilton,—in the residence, that is, of a Scotch physician named Don Patricio Gedde. This gentleman, who had been a long time in the city, and had secured the esteem of the Spaniards by his ability and humane disposition, treated them with the utmost cordiality; and for the

two years during which they remained under his roof never intermitted his friendly and generous attentions. At first they were much inconvenienced by want of suitable clothes ; but a Spanish officer, Don Manuel de Guiror, most liberally pressed upon them a loan of two thousand dollars. They thanked him warmly, and agreed to accept of six hundred, on his receiving their draft for that amount upon the English consul at Lisbon. They then attired themselves decorously, after the Spanish fashion ; and as they were on their parole, went wherever they pleased, and mixed freely in the best society of the city.

We pass over Mr. Byron's description of Santiago, as its aspect has greatly altered in the last hundred and thirty years ; but the character and habits of its people remain unchanged, and we may, therefore, quote a few of the interesting details he supplies in reference to these points. The Spanish women would seem to have produced a great impression on the young midshipman. They are all born, he says, with an ear for music, and most of them have delightful voices ; all play upon the guitar and harp. The latter, at first, appears a "very awkward instrument" for women, says Byron ; an opinion in which very few will be found to agree. They are extremely complaisant and polite ; when asked either to dance, or sing, or play, complying without a moment's hesitation, and so gracefully as greatly to enhance the favour of their compliance. They are remarkably handsome, and, perhaps, as a natural consequence, very extravagant in their dress. Their hair, which is wonderfully luxuriant, they wear of a vast length, and with no other ornament than a few flowers ; they gather it up on the back of the head in four plaits, and twist them round a bodkin, at each end of which is a diamond rose.

Their skirts are open before, and lap over, and are embroidered commonly with three rows of very rich gold or silver lace. In winter they wear an upper waistcoat of cloth of gold or silver; and in summer, of the finest linen, covered all over with the richest Flanders lace. The sleeves are immensely wide. Over all this, when the air is cold, they throw a gauzy mantle of the finest colours. When they go abroad they wear a veil, which is so contrived that only one eye is seen. In truth, Byron's portraiture of the Spanish-American ladies of Chili would seem to justify the application to them of his poet-namesake's glowing description of the ladies of Spain:—

“Oh, had you known her in her softer hour,
Marked her black eye that mocks the coal-black veil,
Heard her light, lively tones in lady's bower,
Seen her long locks that foil the painter's power,
Her fairy form, with more than female grace . . .

“The seal Love's dimpling finger hath imprest
Denotes how soft that chin which bears his touch;
Her lips, whose kisses pout to leave their nest,
Bid man be valiant ere he merit such:
Her glance how wildly beautiful! how much
Hath Phoebus wooed in vain to spoil her cheek,
Which glows yet smoother from his amorous clutch!
Who round the North for paler dames would seek?
How poor their forms appear! how languid, worn, and weak!

“Match me, ye climes which poets love to laud;
Match me, ye harems of the land where now
I strike my strain, far distant, to applaud
Beauties that even a cynic must avow;
Mated are these houris, whom ye scarce allow
To taste the gale lest love should ride the wind,
With Spain's dark-glancing daughters—deign to know,
There your wise Prophet's paradise we find,
His black-eyed maids of heaven, angelically kind!”

The ladies of Santiago are fond of having their mulatto female slaves dressed almost as well as themselves; a fact which argues the existence of a singular nobility of disposition not usual on the part of their European sisters.

Paraguay tea, or *maté*, is their favourite beverage; they

drink it twice a day. It is served in a tiny cup made out of a small calabash or gourd, and tipped with silver. First they put in the herb, then add what sugar they please, and a little orange juice. Hot water is next applied, and the infusion drunk immediately, by means of a long silver tube provided with a round strainer at one end of it. Byron asserts that "it is reckoned a piece of politeness for the lady to suck the tube two or three times first, and then give it to the stranger to drink without wiping it."

During their detention in Santiago, Mr. Campbell renounced his creed, and embraced Roman Catholicism, preparatory to settling in Chili permanently. At the end of two years the president sent for the other three prisoners, informed them that a French ship from Lima, bound for Spain, had put into Valparaiso, and that they should embark in her for Europe. Accordingly, after taking leave of Mr. Geddes and all their friends, they set out for Valparaiso; and, on the 20th of December 1744, embarked on board the *Lys* frigate, of sixteen guns, and four hundred and twenty tons, belonging to St. Malo. The voyage presents no particulars of interest, until we find the ship driven out of her course, and, on the 4th of July 1745, off the island of Porto Rico. Her captain then resolved to steer between the islands of Porto Rico and San Domingo for Cape Francois. On the following morning Captain Cheap informed young Byron that he had just seen a beef-barrel go by the ship; that he felt sure it had but recently been thrown overboard, and that he would venture any wager they should see before long an English cruiser. And in about half an hour two sail were seen to leeward, which were soon observed to be in chase of the French frigate. The French and Spaniards on board now began to feel much alarm, and the English prisoners were proportionately elated. Unfortunately, just as the pursuers were made out to be an

English two-decker and a twenty-gun ship, a dead calm came on.

The wind rose again in the evening, and the French frigate stood away to the northward, hotly chased by the English vessels, which gained rapidly upon her. Everybody on board then gave themselves up as lost; the officers were busy in their cabins filling their pockets with all they held most valuable; the men donned their best clothes; and many of them resorted to Byron with little lumps of gold, saying they would much rather that he, whom they knew, should benefit by their treasures, than those who pursued them. Byron replied, there was no hurry; though he thought them as surely prisoners as if his countrymen were already on board.

The night proved clear and moonlit, and Captain Cheap and his comrades expected every moment to see the ships alongside of them; but on the following morning they were not to be seen, even from the mast-head. Twenty-four hours afterwards, the French frigate came to an anchor in Cape Francois harbour.

Towards the end of August a French squadron of five men-of-war, commanded by Admiral L'Etandune, arrived, for the purpose of convoying a fleet of merchantmen to France. They put to sea on the 6th of September, with about fifty traders under their protection, and accompanied by the frigate which carried the much-tossed-about English prisoners.

"On the 8th," says Byron, "we made Cayeo Grande; and the next day a Jamaica privateer, a large, fine sloop, hove in sight, keeping a little to windward of the convoy, and resolving to pick up one or two of them in the night, if possible. This obliged Monsieur L'Etandune to send a frigate to speak to all the convoy, and order them to keep close to him in the night; which they did, and in such a manner that sometimes seven or eight were on board one or other of them together,

—by which they received much damage, and to repair which the whole squadron was obliged to lie to sometimes for a whole day. The privateer kept her station, jogging on with the fleet. At last the commodore ordered two of his best-going ships to chase her. She appeared to take no notice of them till they were pretty near her, and then would make sail, and be out of sight presently. The chasing ships no sooner returned than the privateer was in company again.

On the evening of the 27th of October the fleet made Cape Ortegal, and on the 31st came to an anchor in Brest Road. The *Lys*, having a valuable cargo on board of gold and silver money, was towed into the harbour next morning, and lashed alongside one of their men-of-war. The bullion was soon landed; and the officers and men, having been many years absent from their native country, were glad to get on shore. The weather was extremely cold, and its inclemency was keenly felt by our poor prisoners, who were both thinly clad and had been long accustomed to hot climates. Had not some of the officers belonging to the ship sent them off victuals every day, they might have been starved; for no official appeared to take any interest in their condition. In a week's time, however, they were transferred to a row-galley, on board of which were some other English prisoners, and moved up the river to Landeman. Here Captain Cheap and his companions were put upon their parole, and allowed to move about freely. They hired the best lodgings they could find, and for three months lived in tolerable comfort, when an order came from the court of Spain to allow them to return home by the first ship that offered. Hearing that a Dutch vessel at Morlaix was ready to sail, they posted thither; but were compelled to linger through six weeks before an opportunity offered of getting away. Nor were their troubles ended when they had come to an agreement with the master of a Dutch lugger to

carry them across to Dover. They embarked, and the Dutchman set sail ; but after a long and uncomfortable passage, he appeared determined to avoid Dover ; and it was fortunate for our Englishmen that a man-of-war appeared to windward, which bore down, sent on board a boat, and afterwards took off Captain Cheap and his companions. Thus, after so many bitter experiences, after perils by sea and perils by land, and a weary and painful absence of nearly six years, they once more reached the “ white cliffs ” of Old England.

IV.

BURNING OF THE "PRINCE."

July 26, 1752.



THE French merchantman, *Le Prince*, under the command of an experienced officer named Morin, sailed from the port of Lorient, in the Bay of Biscay, for Pondicherry, a small town on the Indian coast, belonging to France, on the 19th of February 1752.

Its voyage ominously opened with a disaster ; for it had scarcely doubled the rocky isle of St. Michel, when, owing to a sudden change of wind, it drove on the Turk Reef, and sank so rapidly, that its port-holes were soon beneath the water. Signals of distress were hoisted immediately, and the "port-admiral" (as we should call him) of Lorient repaired on board, to encourage the crew by his presence and direct them by his orders. Part of the cargo being unloaded, the ship floated off with the morning tide. But it was found that she had sprung a dangerous leak, which rendered it necessary for her to be redocked and undergo a thorough overhaul.

On the 10th of June, completely refitted, she once more put to sea with a favourable wind, and for upwards of a fortnight her course was unmarked by a single accident. It seemed as if, in classical language, she had propitiated Fate by her

previous mishap, and was thenceforth destined to a curiously prosperous career.

But on the 26th of July, in lat. $80^{\circ} 30'$ S., and long. 5° W., with a south-westerly wind blowing, and just on the point of noon, one of the seamen informed the officer of the watch that a thin column of smoke was rising through the main hatchway.

At this news, the first lieutenant, who had the hold under his special charge, ordered all the hatchways to be opened, in order to get at the cause of an accident the slightest suspicion of which, on board ship, makes the boldest tremble. The captain, who had been seated at table in the main cabin, hastened on deck, and gave directions for the extinction of the fire. The second lieutenant had already to some extent anticipated them by covering the hatchways with wet sails and tarpaulins, so as to prevent the air from penetrating into the hold. He also proposed to admit the water between decks to the depth of ten or twelve inches. But the air had already found a free passage ; smoke issued in dense clouds ; and the fire increased in intensity.

The captain now ordered out eighty soldiers who were on board, and with bayonets fixed they overawed the crew, so as to prevent any disorder or want of discipline, which would add to the peril of the situation. M. de Latouche, one of the passengers, seconded all his exertions with much prudence and firmness. This eminent Indian general deserved, indeed, a better opportunity for the display of his admirable qualities ; and assuredly had hoped to lead his troops on some field of danger which would have been of greater service to his country.

Everybody on board was busily engaged in pouring water on the spreading, crackling, hissing, sputtering flames ; all the pumps were brought into requisition, and their hose

directed into the hold. So swift, however, was the progress of the conflagration that these measures all proved useless, and seemed to increase the despair and consternation of the crew.

The yawl having caught fire, had been lowered alongside. Four men and one of the warrant-officers seized upon it. They had no oars, and three sailors jumped overboard to take them to the yawl. The captain ordered these fortunate fugitives to return; but they cried they had no rudder, and that a tow-rope must be thrown to them. Perceiving the swift progress of the fire, however, they used every effort to get clear of the burning ship, which, as she had still a little "way" upon her, soon drifted out of their vicinity.

On board the blazing hulk all hands were hard at work; and their courage seemed to be strengthened by the prospect of almost certain death. The master ventured down into the hold, but was driven back by the intense heat; and, indeed, he would have been burned alive but for the great quantity of water poured upon him. Shortly afterwards, flames were seen to issue from the main hatchway. The captain then gave orders to lower the boats; but the strength of the most intrepid was by this time so exhausted that they could bring little force to bear on the tackle. The shallop, however, was hoisted to a sufficient elevation, and was gradually being cleared away, when the wreathing flames coiled around the main-mast with such rapidity and violence, that the ropes and rigging caught fire, and the boat came down with a crash on the starboard battery, heeling over in such a manner that the crew abandoned all hope of righting it.

Men now saw, as in the hour of danger they so often see, that their hope could no longer be placed in human strength or expedients, but only in the mercy of God. A general despondency oppressed the crew, and cries and moans

ascended on every side ; even the animals gave utterance to their pain and terror. Every one began to lift up his heart and hands to Heaven, and in the assurance of approaching death was occupied only with the frightful alternative between the two elements ready to devour him.

The chaplain, who stood on the forecandle, pronounced, after the Roman Catholic custom, the general absolution. At this time the scene on board the burning ship was most affecting. Men rushed to and fro, flinging into the sea every article that might offer a chance of safety,—spars, yards, hencoops, and the like. The confusion was extreme ; some rushed to encounter the dread enemy, and leaped overboard with a shout ; others clung desperately to the shrouds and ropes which hung along the sides, in the hope they would remain above water.

The second lieutenant, whose narrative we are following, says :—

“ I now put the helm a-port, and this manœuvre, as the vessel still answered her helm, sheltered us for some time on that side from the fire which swept along the larboard side from stem to stern. Hitherto I had been so engaged that I had not had time to think of anything but the possible safety of the vessel. But at this moment the horrors of a twofold kind of death forced themselves on my attention, though, through the mercy of Heaven, I preserved my composure of mind.

“ Casting my eyes around, I saw that I stood alone upon the quarter-deck. Hurrying into the state cabin, I found there M. de Latouche, who faced death with the heroic courage that had won so many hard-fought fields in India. ‘ Farewell, my friend and brother ! ’ he exclaimed, embracing me. ‘ Where are you going ? ’ I inquired. ‘ To console my friend Morin. ’ He referred to the captain, who was overwhelmed with grief at the sad fate of his cousins. He had

caused them to divest themselves of their upper clothing, and had lowered them into the heaving waters upon hencoops, which the sailors supported with one arm, while stoutly battling the waves with the other.

“The yards and masts were thronged with men who struggled steadily against the billows, but many of whom were stricken down by the balls which the flames discharged from the loaded guns in quick succession—a third form of death which still further increased the horror of our condition.

“My heart oppressed with anguish, I turned my eyes from the sea. From the starboard gallery, where I was standing, I saw the flames rushing with a frightful roar through the windows of the principal cabins. As it was evident I could do nothing to save the vessel, I stripped myself, and leaped overboard. For some time I had to struggle hard with a soldier, who, in sinking, seized me by the leg. Having at length released myself from his frenzied clutches, I struck out for the sprit-sail yard, which had attracted my gaze. It was loaded with unfortunates, among whom I dared not take a place until I had asked their permission, which was willingly given. Some were completely naked, others in their shirts. They had still the goodness to pity my condition, and their misfortune put my sensibility to a very severe trial. ‘Why do you pity us, lieutenant?’ they said to me. ‘I may well weep for you rather than for myself,’ I replied; ‘my life being already far spent, while you are only beginning yours.’

“M. Morin and M. de Latouche, both so worthy of a better fate, would not quit the ship, and no doubt perished on board of her. In whatever direction I turned my eyes, they were afflicted with the most terrible spectacles. The main-mast, devoured at its foot by the flames, fell overboard, killing many in its fall, but providing others with a last chance of safety.

BURNING OF THE "PRINCE."



“When I was no longer thinking of it, I suddenly caught sight of the yawl at no great distance from us : this was at about five o’clock in the afternoon. I shouted out to the rowers that I was their lieutenant, and asked them to take me on board. They answered that they were willing to do so, if I would swim towards them. It was, in truth, their interest to have with them some person who could guide their course to the nearest shore, and for this reason my company was too necessary for them to refuse my request. The condition which they imposed on me was, however, reasonable enough. They acted prudently in not drawing nearer, for everybody would have endeavoured to force their way on board ; the boat would have capsized, and we should all have been engulfed in the waves. Therefore I rallied all my energies, and was fortunate enough to succeed in reaching the yawl. Afterwards we picked up the pilot and a boatswain, who, having taken refuge on the main-mast, decided, as I had done, to venture on swimming to the boat. Thus the yawl became the ark of safety which rescued the ten persons, the survivors of nearly three hundred !

“Meantime the flames were still devouring our unfortunate ship ; and as our too close neighbourhood became more and more dangerous, we rowed a short distance to windward. Soon afterwards the fire must have reached the magazine, and, with a tremendous explosion, the wreck was hurled into the air. A dense cloud hid from us the light of the setting sun. In the gloom which temporarily prevailed we could see great burning brands hurtling through the mist and smoke, and threatening in their fall to crush the numerous unhappy creatures still maintaining their desperate, hopeless struggle for life. We ourselves were not out of danger : one of the pieces of wreck might reach us, and sink our frail little bark. But Providence, while mercifully shielding us from this last

misfortune, presented to us a most melancholy picture. The ship had disappeared, and its scarred and blackened fragments, scattered over a wide area, floated here and there, with the dead bodies of those who in their fall had terminated at once their lives and their despairing agonies. Some had evidently died through suffocation; others were half burned and cruelly wounded, yet still retained sufficient consciousness to feel all the pains of their twofold torture.

“Happily I did not lose my presence of mind, and I proposed to row towards the wreck, and pick up, if possible, some provisions and other necessaries. We were in want of everything, and were exposed to death by famine—a death slower and more cruel than that which had overtaken our late companions. We fell in with several casks, in which we trusted to find a resource against this imminent peril; but great was our mortification when they proved to be a portion of the gunpowder thrown overboard on the first outbreak of the flames.

“Night was already at hand when we found a small cask of brandy, five pounds of salt pork, a piece of sail-cloth, some cordage, and a quantity of planks. While pushing off as swiftly as possible, we busied ourselves with the equipment of our new craft. Everybody worked with zeal, and there was nothing which we did not turn to account. A sailor had a couple of needles on his person, and with these we stitched the hem of a piece of red cloth, and hoisted it on a gaff to serve as a sail. We contrived to rig up a plank for a rudder, though we could steer our course only by the roughest guess-work, for we had neither instruments nor charts, and at the time of our last observations were fully two hundred leagues from the nearest land.

“A favourable wind soon carried us away from the scene of the disastrous fate of the good ship *Prince*. For eight

days and nights we kept a steady course, without seeing land, exposed, naked as we were, to the hot rays of the sun by day and the piercing frosts of night. On the sixth day, a brief shower made us hope for some relief from the burning thirst which devoured us. We attempted to collect with our mouth and hands the little water that fell. We sucked our piece of cloth ; but as this was already soaked with sea-water, it gave a brackish bitter flavour to the rain which it absorbed. On the other hand, if the rain had been heavier, it would have abated the wind which drove us forward ; and if it had fallen calm, we must have perished.

“To gain some idea of the course we were steering, we consulted every day the rising and setting of the sun, while the Southern Cross showed us in what direction to follow the wind. For food we were compelled to be satisfied with a morsel of salt pork once every twenty-four hours, and a teaspoonful of brandy at intervals. Some flying-fish passed, but we could not catch any of them. The uncertainty of our lot, the lack of food, the tossing of the sea, all produced a miserable condition of sleeplessness. Nature seemed no longer to discharge her functions ; only a feeble hope occasionally animated our strength, and prevented us from envying the condition of our late comrades.

“I passed the eighth night at the helm ; for upwards of ten hours I held the tiller, frequently imploring some one to relieve me, for I was ready to sink. My unfortunate companions were not less exhausted, and despair began to seize upon me. At length, when almost overcome with fatigue, pain, hunger, and thirst, we discovered land by the first rays of the sun, on the 3rd of August. The reader would need to have undergone our bitter experiences to understand the revolution which joy suddenly wrought in us. Our energies revived ; we adopted the necessary precautions to prevent

ourselves from being carried away by the currents. Two hours after noon we touched the coast of Brazil, and sailed into Tresson Bay ; another league, and our boat was driven ashore.

“Our first care, on landing, was to acknowledge the merciful goodness of God. Then we flung ourselves on the eagerly-desired shore, and rolled in the sand in a wild transport of joy. Our appearance was horrible ; our faces preserved some semblance of humanity only to make known more sensibly our misfortunes. Some were completely naked, others were partially clad in soiled and tattered shirts ; I had twisted round my body a scarlet sash to distinguish myself from my men. As yet, too, we were not at the end of all our troubles. Delivered, it is true, from the greatest danger, that of the greedy ocean, we were still tormented by hunger and thirst, and absolutely uncertain whether the coast we had reached was inhabited by a humane or savage people. We once more raised our hearts in prayer to Heaven, which soon vouchsafed to us a merciful deliverance.

“We were deliberating in what direction it would be most prudent to push forward, when about fifty Portuguese, most of whom were armed, approached us, and inquired into the cause of our appearance. Our reply was the simple story of what we had suffered, and the mercies we had experienced at the hand of Providence ; we explained our wants, and solicited the rights of hospitality. The inhabitants, sympathizing with our misfortunes, blessed the Author of our preservation, and hastened to conduct us to their houses. On the road we crossed a river, into which all our people hastened to throw themselves to quench their thirst ; they plunged in the water with delight. And, in effect, these baths eventually proved one of the remedies of which we made the most frequent, and, at the same time, most salutary use.

“The superintendent or magistrate of the district came to welcome us to his house. He charitably provided us with linen shirts and trousers, and had some fish and manioc flour prepared for us immediately. After this frugal repast, though sleep was so much needed by us, we hastened to offer up our solemn thanksgivings to God; and having learned that a church dedicated to St. Michael was distant about half a league, we repaired thither, chanting the praises of the Lord, and offered to him the homage of our just gratitude, our preservation being so evidently owing to his mercy.”

It is needless to say that there is something peculiarly *French* in the tone and style of this narrative, and that it contrasts very remarkably with the simple directness which would have marked an English seaman's story. But we can gather from it the outline of a sad catastrophe—the loss of a “goodly vessel” and nearly three hundred lives, apparently without any well-directed efforts having been made to save either the ship or those on board. Probably the character of the English sailor never shows to greater advantage than in the hour of sudden peril; but it is not at such a time that the best qualities of the French mariner are usually displayed.

V.

LOSS OF THE "GROSVENOR."

August 1782.



THE *Grosvenor*, a fine East Indiaman, well built and well found, left Ceylon on the 13th of June 1782, bound for England. The details of an ocean-voyage are generally monotonous ; and when the ship is good, and the captain skilful, and the wind fair, it presents almost daily a succession of the same scenes. The broad ocean, stretching away on either hand like a level waste ; the sky clothed in the apparently endless sunshine of the Tropics ; the lazy, even motion of the goodly bark ; the mechanical movements of the seamen ; the appearance of a sea-bird or two, a group of tumbling porpoises, or a cluster of flying-fishes ;—these are the features of a tranquil passage “homeward,” so far as they attract the attention of ordinary observers. It is true that a speculative mind or a quick imagination may always find material for its thoughts or its dreams. The wonders of the deep and of the sky may well attract one given to reverie and meditation. To such, the shifting colours of the sea, and its varying expanse,—now ribbed with waves like the dimples of a pool, now heaved into long rolling ridges of dark green water, crested with snowy foam—the noontide aspect, the moonlit phantasma-



“FEATURES OF A TRANQUIL PASSAGE.”

goria—the soft sigh of the gentle breeze, the dull roar of the distant gale,—are matters of intense pleasure, and suggestive of enticing trains of reflection.

Thus says Washington Irving :—“ I delighted to loll over the quarter-railing, or climb to the main-top, of a calm day, and muse for hours together on the tranquil bosom of a summer’s sea ; to gaze upon the piles of golden clouds just peering above the horizon, fancy them some fairy realms, and people them with a creation of my own ; to watch the gentle undulating billows rolling their silver volumes, as if to die away on those happy shores.

“ There was a delicious sensation of mingled serenity and awe with which I looked down from my giddy height on the

monsters of the deep at their uncouth gambols. Shoals of porpoises tumbling about the bow of the ship, the grampus slowly heaving his huge form above the surface, or the ravenous shark darting like a spectre through the blue waters. My imagination would conjure up all that I had heard or read of the watery world beneath me; of the finny herds that roam its fathomless valleys; of the shapeless monsters that lurk among the very foundations of the earth; and of those wild phantasms that swell the tales of fishermen and sailors."

For nearly seven weeks the voyage of the *Grosvenor* was monotonously prosperous, and she made a rapid voyage, favoured by propitious breezes. On the 2nd of August her officers believed themselves to be within three hundred miles of land. The wind now rose quite suddenly, and came in such violent and uncertain gusts, that on the following day they lay to under a fore-sail and mizzen-stay-sail. In the morning some seamen on the top-mast thought they could discern breakers, but the mate of the watch only laughed at their alarms. They were so seriously persuaded, however, that one of them gained admittance to the cabin and told the captain, who immediately went on deck, and ordered the ship to be wore. Before his orders could be carried out she struck! On sounding the pumps, they found no water in the hold; the ship's stern lay high upon the rocks, while her bows were much depressed. In about ten minutes the gale blew heavily from the shore, and there seemed every risk that the *Grosvenor* would be driven out to sea. It was impossible to fire signals of distress, for the powder-magazine was under water. And the ship was so securely lodged, that though they cut away her fore and main masts she did not right herself.

It would be impossible to describe the fear and despondency

that now made victims of the living beings on board the *Grosvenor*. The strongest and most terrible emotions of the human soul cannot be rendered in words ; like the old sculptor, when the grief is too great to be expressed, we throw a veil over it. A few of the seamen and passengers, however, preserved their presence of mind, and set to work upon a raft, composed of spars, beams, and yards, on which the women, children, and sick might be floated to land. A Lascar and two Italians made an effort to swim ashore with the deep-sea line : one perished, but the others succeeded. To this line a rope was attached and hauled ashore ; and afterwards, by means of the rope, a hawser. While this process was going on, a crowd of natives assembled at the water's edge, and rendered zealous assistance. The hawser was fastened to the rocks by one end, and the other being fixed to the capstan on board the ship, it was drawn perfectly taut. The raft, meanwhile, was completed, and a nine-inch hawser being fastened round it, it was launched, and towed round to the stern, that the women and children might embark from the quarter-gallery. Four men got upon it to assist them. The heavy surf, however, broke the rope in twain ; the raft drifted on shore, and was capsized, three of the men being drowned.

One sentiment now prevailed on board : *Sauve qui peut*,—the selfish but powerful instinct of self-preservation. Some, seizing hold of the hawser, sought to haul themselves ashore ; but nearly all who resorted to this dangerous experiment perished in the boiling surf. The ship now parted in two before the main-mast, and the bow drifting round with the current, fell athwart the stern. The wind now blowing in-shore offered another chance of safety ; and all the crew and passengers clambered on the poop, as lying nearest to the strand. By the joint action of the wind and waves they were gradually lifted in ; but the strain and pressure were so great, that

part of the after-deck was literally torn asunder fore and aft. They crowded together—the hundred and odd souls of the *Grosvenor*—on the starboard quarter, which floated with some degree of safety in shoal water, while terrible seas dashed relentlessly over every other part of the wreck. By slow degrees they were hauled ashore, and before nightfall everybody was safely landed except the cook, who was too drunk to move.

The natives had departed at sunset, but they left behind them the remains of their fire, and these being kindled into a lusty blaze, the shipwrecked were able to cook for supper a hog and some poultry that had been washed ashore. A cask of beef, another of flour, and a third of arrack, were also rescued from the waves, and placed under the guardianship of the captain. With some sails which lay about the beach, a couple of tents were constructed for the ladies.

No precautions, however, were taken for defence against the natives; and the captain seems to have made little or no effort to maintain discipline among his men. He knew that his ship was wrecked on the African coast, and without any of the usual preparations he resolved to set out for the Cape of Good Hope, which he conjectured to be at the distance of fifteen to twenty days' journey. The chief mate was ill. He was therefore carried in a hammock slung on a pole; and the expedition, in a state of complete disorganization, started on the 7th, followed by some of the natives. Fortunately they found a beaten track, leading from village to village, which ensured them against wandering out of a direct course. But they were grievously troubled by the Kaffirs. Instead of keeping together in one compact body, which could not fail to have intimidated the savages, they travelled in small parties, under no fixed leadership, and were plundered and ill-treated by all the Kaffirs whom they encountered. In

fact, they ought not to have attempted the land-journey at all. They had a carpenter with them ; the materials of the wreck were abundant ; they might have constructed a capacious boat or two, and made their way along the coast, or have despatched a few of their number to seek assistance at the Cape.

For five days they continued their weary wanderings. At length, as they traversed a deep ravine, three savages met them, who pointed their javelins at the captain's throat. The insult roused his courage, and seizing one of them, he wrenched the spear from his hand, and broke off the barb. The savages departed discomfited. But the next day they assembled to the number of four hundred, armed with shields and spears. Now for the first time the British displayed a prowess worthy of the race. Stationing the women and children at some distance, under a guard, they advanced in steady array against the Kaffirs, and, after a two hours' engagement, compelled them to retreat, carrying away many wounded. The British pursued them to a rising ground, where a kind of truce was completed.

Next day they came to another ravine, in the shelter of which they passed the night, sorely disturbed by the howling of wild beasts. At daybreak they resumed their march, but were once more surrounded and plundered by the Kaffirs, who carried away the tinder-box and flint. Each person was thenceforth compelled to travel with a torch in his hand. Just before sunset the natives resumed their annoyance and ill-treatment ; proceeding so far as to rob the gentlemen of their watches, and to unroll the ladies' hair to secure the diamonds they had placed there for safety.

Two days later, their supply of water being finished, they were compelled to dig in the sand, and be content with the brackish draught thus obtained. Their provisions were also

reduced to their last rations. They then agreed to divide into two parties, one to go in advance of the other; but next day the vanguard, having been forced to wait on the bank of a river all night for ebb-tide, were overtaken by the others. They crossed the river in a body. On the day fol-



GATHERING SHELL-FISH.

lowing they arrived at a large village, and fell in with a fugitive Dutchman, named Trout, whom they had met before, and who gave them some instructions as to their route. Next morning a detachment repaired to the sea-side at low-water to gather shell-fish, and obtained a supply of oysters,

mussels, and limpets. In the afternoon they again agreed to divide, in the hope that by doing so they would more easily obtain subsistence, and less readily attract the attention of the savages. But they forgot that at the same time they rendered themselves less able to resist a hostile attack ; less able, too, to forage successfully. However, they separated, and the two parties never met again.

The second mate's party, as it is called in all the chronicles—though Captain Talbot was one of the number, and ought to have taken the command—travelled until nightfall, and then, arriving at a locality where wood and water were abundant, kindled a great fire, which protected them during the night from molestation by wild beasts. Next day they accomplished thirty miles, and though they met with many natives, they did not offer to obstruct or annoy them. Their food was chiefly sorrel and wild berries, but they also caught a few shell-fish. The following evening they encamped for the night on the bank of a broad, deep-flowing river. In the morning, as many of them could not swim, it was resolved that they should follow up its windings to some more convenient spot. Having reached a point where it was about two miles broad, they constructed a kind of raft, and those who could not swim were floated across by their more skilful comrades.

They had spent three days in ascending the river ; they occupied an equal time in descending the other bank to the sea. On the fourth day afterwards they reached a high and thickly-wooded mountain, which they were compelled to climb, as the rocky shore was absolutely impassable. Yet the ascent of the mountain was a difficult enterprise ; they were frequently obliged to climb the trees before they could find their way, and night had come on when the highest crest was gained. This proved to be a spacious undulating plain,

watered by a crystal stream. Here they bivouacked ; lighting a fire as their usual precaution against wild beasts, which were attracted to this locality in considerable numbers by the abundance of water. At daybreak Haynes—from whose narrative these particulars are gathered—ascended one of the tallest trees to examine in what direction the sea-coast lay, and discovered that another thick wood intervened between them and the foot of the mountain. It was dark before they completed the descent, and reached the shore, where they supped off oysters. At noon next day they found a dead whale on the beach—a precious treasure to those famished men ! The natives had robbed them of their knives, and as they could not cut it up, they lighted a fire upon the huge fleshy bulk, and dug out with an oyster-shell the parts that were thus rudely cooked.

For other four days—weary, wretched, hopeless days, such as we who sit at home “at ease” are unable, in our comfortable, softly-gliding existence, even to conceive of—the fugitives wandered over rock and desert, foot-sore, famished, and near unto death with fatigue. Captain Talbot fell behind, out of sheer exhaustion : need we add that he perished ? Two of the seamen were lost from the same cause. Next morning they found a couple of planks lying on a sandy mound ; a spike-nail was in each ; they extracted the nails from the wood, and flattened them between two stones into knives. Soon afterwards they discovered another dead whale on the beach, surrounded by a number of natives ; far from molesting them, however, they lent them a spear with which to cut pieces off the carcass, and these they carried away to roast when opportunity served.

In a day or two another of their party dropped behind. Then the carpenter died. They still continued to wend their way along the sea-shore, and coming upon the embers of a

fire which the natives had deserted, they gladly relighted their extinguished firebrands.

On the following day they had the good fortune to purchase a bullock in exchange for the interior of a watch and a few gaudy buttons. It was divided by lot, and some made shoes out of the skin.

Ten days were spent very miserably in traversing a sandy desert, where they found a little water on digging. Then they crossed the territory of a tribe named the *Sambukooes*, from whom they experienced but indifferent treatment. Penetrating into the interior, they fell in with a party of savages, who attacked them fiercely; several of the unfortunate castaways were wounded, and one, whose skull was fractured, fell into a delirium, and died. Haynes was knocked down, and left for dead; but he contrived to crawl on, and in two or three hours overtook his weary and disheartened comrades. They turned again to the sea-shore, as affording a safer and less troublesome route, and came upon another dead whale, of which each took with him as much as he could carry. But in a few days this temporary supply failed, and the poor wretches had no sustenance whatever but brackish water. Robert Fitzgerald, after some hours of weary crawling, asked for a shell of this water. Haynes gave it to him; he drank it eagerly; asked for another, which he also swallowed, and then lay down and expired.

At four o'clock, on the same day, a seaman named French declared he must take a little rest. As he did not overtake them, the others went back to look for him; but he was not to be seen, and they supposed he had been carried off by wild beasts. Now even water failed them: they suffered agony from thirst; the glands of their throats and mouths were swollen; they found it difficult to articulate; their skin was

hot and dry ; and, on the second day of this crowning misery, the steward and another expired.

Next morning another of the little party died, and only three remained,—Haynes, Evans, and Wormington,—who felt that, unless some succour arrived, they must quickly share the fate of their comrades. Consider their condition : no food, no water ; their clothes in rags ; their feet scorched by the burning sand, their heads by the glowing sky ; their bodies worn to skeletons by hunger and fatigue. That life could long be cherished within such emaciated frames seemed impossible. Yet, with indomitable courage, they travelled onwards, and soon fell in with five of the crew who had parted from them some days before. They had found a young seal, fresh driven on shore, and had banqueted on its flesh. They spent the next two days in collecting shell-fish to carry along with them.

Two of the party, wandering inland, fell a prey to wild beasts, and their number was now reduced to six. For the following week they traversed a desolate country, seeing neither huts nor natives ; but on the seventh day they gained the Schwartz river, where the landscape assumed a richer and more cheering character, and native villages were visible against the horizon.

Four of the party now went in search of provisions, while two remained to take charge of the fire, and collect fuel for the fire they burned during the night. In the interval of their absence, two men, armed with muskets, approached them. They belonged to a Dutch settlement in the neighbourhood, and while hunting for strayed cattle had caught sight of their bivouac. On hearing their painful narrative, they went in search of the foragers, whom they found cutting up a whale. They made them throw the unwholesome flesh away, promising them a supply of healthy food and a share of

their dwelling. Judge for yourself, O reader ! how great must have been the joy of these poor creatures, thus unexpectedly relieved. In truth, their joy touched upon the limits of madness ; one wept hysterically, another laughed, a third danced. On reaching the home of their saviours, they ate voraciously, and with difficulty could be restrained within the limits of moderation, though excess would have been their death.

They remained with the Dutchmen some days until they had renewed their strength. They were then sent forward in carts from one settlement to another, until they reached Zwellendam, about one hundred and ten miles from Cape Town. As they passed along, the Boers (or Dutch farmers) everywhere assembled to hear the strange painful story of their wonderful journey ; and hospitably entertained them, and on their departure loaded them with gifts. In due time they reached the Cape, where they took ship for England.

The Dutch governor of the Cape (which was not at that time an English colony) generously despatched an expedition into the interior to rescue any others of the *Grosvenor's* crew who might have fallen into the hands of the natives. Three seamen, seven Lascars, and two black women were eventually recovered.

VI.

LOSS OF THE "ROYAL GEORGE."

August 1782.



SUPPOSE that every one of my readers is familiar with the really noble and genuine lyric in which the poet Cowper has commemorated the peculiar circumstances attending the loss of the *Royal George* :—

"Toll for the brave !
The brave that are no more !
All sunk beneath the wave,
Fast by their native shore.

"Eight hundred of the brave,
Whose courage well was tried,
Had made the vessel heel,
And laid her on her side.

"A land-breeze shook the shrouds,
And she was overset ;
Down went the *Royal George*,
And all her crew complete..

"It was not in the battle ;
No tempest gave the shock ;
She sprang no fatal leak ;
She ran upon no rock...

"Weigh the vessel up,
Once dreaded by our foes '
And mingle with the cup
The tear that England owes.

"Her timbers yet are sound,
And she may float again,
Full-charged with England's thunder,
And plough the distant main.

“ But Kempenfeldt is gone,
His victories are o’er ;
And he and his eight hundred
Shall plough the waves no more.”

The *Royal George* was a fine one-hundred-gun ship, carrying the flag of Rear-Admiral Kempenfeldt, a gallant seaman and an accomplished officer, who was esteemed, both at home and abroad, to be one of the most experienced naval tacticians of the time. He was the son of a Swedish gentleman, who, coming early into the English service, generously followed the ruined fortunes of his master, James II., but who, after that monarch’s death, was recalled by Queen Anne.

In August 1782 he was appointed third in command, under Admiral Lord Howe, in a large expedition then fitting out at Portsmouth for the relief of Gibraltar. He hoisted his flag in the *Royal George* ; but just as she was ready to sail, with her admiral, officers, crew, and stores all on board, and only awaiting the final instructions of the Admiralty, a slight leak was discovered near her keel. It was, however, considered of such slight importance as to render unnecessary her return into Portsmouth Harbour to be docked ; and the carpenters, in order to repair it, laid the vessel slightly on her side at Spithead, where she was lying at anchor. So little danger was supposed to attend the operation, that her officers and crew remained on board, as well as that motley assemblage of wives, sweethearts, “slop-dealers,” “bumboat-women,” and children, which was then wont to congregate on the decks of a vessel about to sail for a foreign station.

The work of repair began on the morning of the 29th of August, when the rear-admiral was writing in his cabin, and most of the crew and visitors were engaged “between decks.” The carpenters, in their eagerness to get at the leak that the ship might not be detained at Spithead, appear to have laid her more on her broadside than was originally intended, or



CHART OF SPITHEAD.

than her officers were aware of. About ten o'clock a sudden gale of wind arose in the north-west, threw the *Royal George* still more off her balance, and, her lower deck-ports being open, she filled immediately with water, and in three minutes went down! A victualling ship, which lay alongside, was swallowed up in the terrible vortex created by the sudden plunge of so huge a vessel, and several small craft at a greater distance escaped with the utmost difficulty.

So sudden was the catastrophe, so terrible, and so overwhelming, that those on shore who were accidentally spectators of it could not for a moment recover the power of

action. They stood like men paralyzed. At length, awakening to the dreadful nature of the calamity, they raised an alarm, and every boat and wherry at Portsmouth put off to the assistance of the sufferers. But as most of the crew and their friends were, as I have said, between decks at the time of the disaster, the number rescued was comparatively small. Among those who perished was brave Kempenfeldt himself.



FOUNDERING OF THE "ROYAL GEORGE."

About three hundred were saved ; chiefly sailors who could swim, or had been able to secure a stout spar or plank ; and among them were Lieutenant (afterwards Admiral) Sir Philip Durham, and Captain Martin Waghorn. The number of those drowned or suffocated has been variously estimated at between seven hundred and a thousand. As the full complement of the *Royal George* was nine hundred, and there could not have been on board fewer than three hundred visitors, the latter number is probably approximative to the truth.

“ A catastrophe so singular, arising from such an apparently

trifling cause, involving so much misery and lamentation over the numerous dead, within sight of a populous and busy seaport, naturally excited considerable attention, and few events in our naval annals are better known than the 'Loss of the *Royal George*.' Some of her timbers drifted ashore, and from these a variety of relics was fashioned, whose rapid sale suggested to speculators a profitable mode of business not yet utterly extinct in the streets of Portsmouth. As many snuff-boxes, wooden cannons, card-cases, models, and other *souvenirs* have been sold, with the guarantee that they were manufactured from the wreck of the *Royal George*, as would provide timber for the construction of half-a-dozen of our largest men-of-war ! Not long ago, in a shop in Portsmouth, we saw ticketed for sale, as made from the aforesaid wreck, a many-bladed knife of palpable Sheffield manufacture !”

The dead bodies which the sea cast up from the wreck of the *Royal George* were buried on a tract of low-lying land at Ryde, in the Isle of Wight, then known as the *Duver* ; that is, land once overflowed by the sea. This tract is now covered with streets of handsome villas, but as late as 1804 the grassy mounds indicating the last resting-places of the sufferers were distinctly visible. No trace, however, is now extant, and no memorial records the fate of the *Royal George*.

The position of so huge a wreck in the very midst of a much-frequented roadstead necessarily proved a great obstacle to navigation ; and several accidents occurred, which awakened the attention of the Admiralty to the desirability of its removal.

At intervals various attempts were made to accomplish this great object, but very little resulted from them.

But in the summer of 1839, Colonel (afterwards General)

Pasley, an officer of distinguished scientific attainments, undertook the task; and in the course of six seasons—1839 to 1844—successfully completed it; much to the renown of that famous corps, the Royal Sappers and Miners, by a detachment of whom his directions were courageously and perseveringly carried out. Frequently the divers were six to eight hours a day under water, at a depth of from ten to twelve fathoms; and by long experience they learned to economize time and save labour in so skilful a manner, that all of them sent up to the boats in attendance upon them their bundles of staves, casks, or timber "as closely packed together as a woodman would make up his fagots in the open air." In one haul a certain Corporal Jones sent up fifty-eight such pieces lashed together, and a certain Corporal Harris ninety-one.

In order to break up the wreck, galvanic action was employed. Large copper cylinders were closely filled with gunpowder, and deposited at suitable points. They were then connected by wires with a powerful Voltaic battery, which was fixed in a barge moored near the spot. The divers having retired, the battery was fired, and the explosion of the cylinders separated the timbers of the submerged vessel; and this process was repeated as often as was found necessary. It was, we suppose, the first instance of *submarine mining* on record.

The work was concluded in 1844, cannon having been recovered valued at upwards of £5000, in addition to a vast quantity of iron-work, planks, beams, spars, and general stores.

Such was the end of the *Royal George*; a ship which had carried the flag of a Hawke and a Kempenfeldt, and had once counted among her midshipmen William Falconer, the author of a poem of much simple pathos and unadorned beauty, "The Shipwreck."

VII.

LOSS OF THE "HALSWELL."

January 1786.



HE *Halswell*, like the *Kent*, was a stately East India-man; one of those noble two-deckers which, as Byron says,

"Walked the waters like a thing of life,"

but which are rapidly being superseded by the long, swift steamer, with its constantly revolving screw and smoke-venting funnel.

The commander of the *Halswell* was Captain Richard Pierce, a veteran officer, distinguished for his resolution, courage, and ability. His ship left the East India Docks on the 16th of November 1785, and dropped down to Gravesend to complete her cargo. She had several passengers on board; among them some young ladies, with the captain's two daughters.

On the 1st of January 1786, the *Halswell* sailed through the Downs—that portion of the English Channel which lies off the coast of Kent—with a favourable breeze. On the following day, a calm set in; but it did not last. On the afternoon of the third day, a southerly wind sprang up, and the weather towards sunset growing thick and unpromising, Captain Pierce came to an anchor.

During the night the weather grew worse, and early next morning a violent hurricane was blowing, driving the ship towards shore. Captain Pierce then ordered the cables to be cut, and ran out to sea ; scudding through the Channel under press of sail, and at an unusual rate of speed. The sea rolled heavily, and much water was shipped on the main deck ; but worse remained behind, for, on sounding the well, it was found that in her buffetings with the billows the ship had sprung a leak. All hands were immediately set to work at the pumps ; for in the hold the water was already five feet deep.

Every expedient that occurred to the veteran commander was tried on the 4th of January, in the hope of righting the ship. The mizzen-mast was cut away, and afterwards the main : on the latter occasion, five men were washed overboard.

At first, notwithstanding the almost Herculean exertions of the men, the leak gained upon the pumps. But in a few hours the water was somewhat got under, and as the wind went down, hopes of safety were freely entertained, though the ship, having struggled greatly, still laboured hard. The clouds and mists now disappeared, and at a distance of about four or five leagues the grand outline of Berry Head was visible. Captain Pierce ordered jury-masts to be rigged up, and, with as much canvas as he could spread, bore up for Portsmouth. In the morning, however, the wind again blew from the south, and the thick weather settled down on sea and land.

At noon they were able to make out the chalky cliffs of Portland, lying two or three leagues to the north-west. In the evening the wind increased to a gale. The Portland lights were seen bearing north-west, a few leagues off. Afraid of drifting in-shore, Captain Pierce wore ship, and got her head westward ; but he soon discovered that they lost way in that direction, and stretching on to the eastward, he made for

the shelter of Studland Bay, in the hope of weathering Peverel Point.

Gradually the weather improved, and at about eleven o'clock it became clear, showing the gaunt promontory of St. Alban's Head lowering to the leeward. The captain at once perceived the peril of their situation. Dashed against that remorseless rocky coast, there would be little hope for ship or crew! He took in sail with the utmost promptitude, and let go the small bower and sheet anchors; but they proved insufficient to hold the ship. She dragged them with her, and began to drive in-shore. Mr. Meriton, the second mate, a man of remarkable decision and heroic constancy, now told his commander—what, indeed, Captain Pierce too clearly saw—that there was no hope of saving the good *Halswell*. Her ocean career was nearly terminated; she was rapidly approaching the rock-bound coast, and every moment might be expected to strike.

At about two in the morning, the captain and his officer held a second council, the former expressing his apprehensions for the fate of his daughters. The mate, however, could suggest no means of safety; and even while they spoke, the ship struck so violently as to dash the heads of those who were standing in the cabin against the deck above them.

A shriek of many voices, yet in its simultaneous agony as of one voice, rang through the hapless vessel, as she was beaten from rock to rock, her timbers straining and groaning with each cruel blow, until she speedily bilged, and fell over, with her broadside towards the shore.

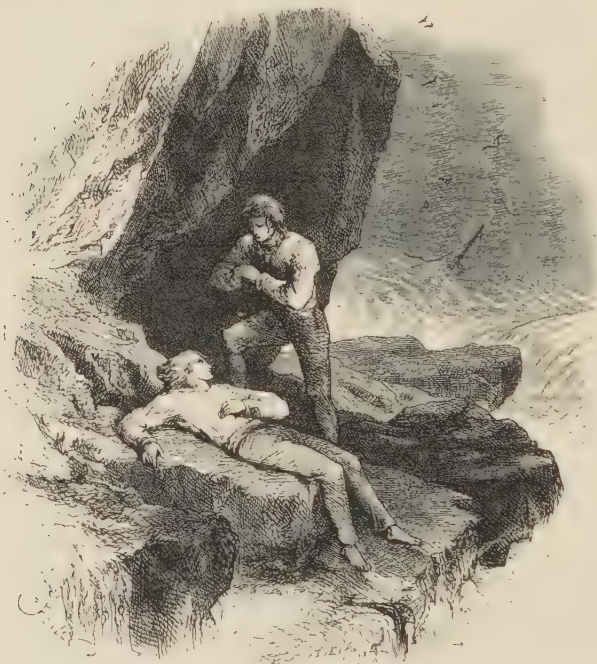
Mr. Meriton then advised the sailors to seek that side of the ship which lay lowest on the rocks, and take whatever opportunities might offer of escaping to the shore. He then returned to what was called the round-house, a kind of circular cabin on the main-deck, where all the passengers and

most of the officers had assembled. He endeavoured to soothe the anxious and encourage the dispirited ; assuring the ladies, who were naturally overwhelmed with terror, that in his opinion the ship would hold together until morning, when all would be saved.

The *Halswell* had struck on a very dangerous part of the Dorsetshire coast ; namely, on the rocks near Seacombe, between Peverel Point and St. Alban's Head. The cliffs are here of formidable height, and they rise almost perpendicularly from their very base ; a grim and frowning rampart, which seems to say to the waves of ocean, "Thus far, and no further." At the bottom, however, these defiant waters have hollowed out a cavern of considerable size ; and it was at the mouth of this cavern that the wreck of the *Halswell* lay, the full peril of her position being concealed from those on board by the pitchy darkness of the night.

Let us return to the round-house ; not that it is necessary to paint a scene which every reader's imagination will picture to himself as one of the most painful and pathetic character. Nearly fifty persons had gathered within this small apartment, and among them Captain Pierce, who sat with a daughter on each side of him, alternately clasping them to his aching heart. In order to arouse, as he hoped, the attention of those on shore, Mr. Meriton cut several wax-candles into pieces, and fastened them up in various parts of the round-house. He also lighted all the glass lanterns on which he could lay his hands, not knowing that the ship was buried in a hollow of the cliffs where no human eye could discover its necessity. Having procured a basket of oranges, he prevailed on some of the unfortunate ladies to refresh themselves by partaking of them. But before long a sad alteration was noticeable in the position of the ship. The most sanguine

could not deny that her sides were giving way, and that the incessant roll of the billows was lifting up her deck. Mr. Meriton, on attempting to go forwards, found that the vessel had parted amidships. The bows had now changed their position, and lay more out towards the sea, and the crew and



SAVED.

soldiers were rapidly abandoning the ship. Mr. Meriton, seeing that to remain longer on board was useless, resolved on following their example. By the light of a lantern, he discovered a spar, which—so it seemed to his excited gaze—lay from the ship's side to the rocks. He contrived to reach the

end of it, but in stepping off fell into the waters, which, after hustling him about, dashed him into the cavern, where he held on by a projection of the rock, and with the assistance of a seaman who had also gained this retreat, made good his footing above the reach of the surf.

Among the sailors who trusted themselves to the billows not a few contrived to reach this cavern, and clambering up its rocky walls, stood upon narrow ledges to avoid the out-draught of each receding flood. From their insecure stand-points they could discern some parts of the ship, which they hoped would hold together until day dawned upon the waters ; but, alas ! a long groan of agony—that terrible piercing cry of human distress and despair which is never forgotten by one who once has heard it—told them that their hopes were in vain, and that the *Halswell*, with all on board, was buried in the devouring deep.

After much suffering in the cavern, a few of the seamen contrived to climb to the top of the cliffs and seek assistance. When it arrived, the shipwrecked sufferers were drawn up by means of ropes, and removed to the nearest cottages, where rest and refreshment soon restored them. But the loss of life due to the wreck of the *Halswell* was very pitiful ; out of two hundred and forty men, women, and children—crew and passengers—only seventy-four were saved.

VIII.

WRECK OF THE FRIGATES "L'ASTROLABE" AND "LA BOUSSOLE."

1788.



THE scheme of the voyage of circumnavigation in which La Pérouse, the celebrated French seaman, perished, was prepared under the direction of Louis XVI., who with his own hands, it is said, drew up his instructions, and indicated the objects of this new exploration of seas already traversed by Captain Cook. Jean François de Galaup de la Pérouse had distinguished himself in the war that followed the revolt of our American colonies. He was brave, skilful, and humane; and his romantic disposition fitted him to comprehend and realize the generous tenor of his instructions:—"The Sieur de la Pérouse, on all occasions, will employ the utmost gentleness and humanity towards the different peoples he will visit in the course of his voyage.

"He will study with zeal and interest every measure which can ameliorate their condition, by procuring for their country the vegetables, fruits, and useful trees of Europe; and by explaining to them the use to be made of these gifts, the object of which is to multiply on their soil the productions necessary for peoples who draw almost their whole sustenance from the earth.

“ If imperious circumstances, which it is but prudent to anticipate in so long a voyage, should ever constrain the Sieur de la Pérouse to profit by the superiority of his arms over those of the savages, to obtain, in spite of their opposition, the objects necessary to life—such as food, and wood, and water—he will employ his strength only with the greatest moderation, and will rigorously punish those of his people who may disobey or neglect his orders. In all other cases, if he cannot obtain the friendship of the savages by mild measures, he will seek to restrain them by his menaces, and by inspiring them with fear ; but he will have recourse to arms only at the last extremity, and only in self-defence, and in circumstances where any yielding or weakness would compromise the safety of the ships and the lives of the Frenchmen whose preservation is intrusted to him.

“ His Majesty would regard as one of the happiest triumphs of the expedition, that it should be terminated without having cost the life of a single man.”

La Pérouse set sail from Brest Roads on the 1st of August 1785. The scientific men embarked on board the two frigates were instructed to attempt the solution of the geographical and scientific problems suggested by recent celebrated voyagers. La Pérouse hoisted his flag on board *La Boussole*. For the command of the *Astrolabe*, he had chosen the Vicomte de Langle, who had acted as his lieutenant in an engagement with English ships among the ice-drift of Hudson Bay.

After traversing the Pacific Ocean, the expedition landed at Behring's Mount St. Elias, on the north-west coast of America, of which it accomplished a minute exploration for upwards of 600 leagues. It was during this reconnaissance that Pérouse, who had hitherto lost not a single man, experienced

his first reverse. The following description of the circumstances is adapted from the official narrative of La Pérouse's voyage :—

“ It is with the keenest regret that I am about to trace the history of a disaster a thousand times more cruel than the diseases and all the other incidents of the longest voyages. I yield to the rigorous duty which I have imposed upon myself, of writing this narrative, and I am not ashamed to confess that my regrets, since this event, have been a hundred times accompanied by my tears, and that time has failed to subdue my anguish ; every object, every moment recalls to me the loss we have sustained, and under circumstances which inspired in us no fear of such an event.

“ It was desirable that the soundings of the Port des Français [east of Cape Fairweather] should be recorded on our marine charts : for this purpose, the cutter of the *Astrolabe*, under the orders of M. de Marchainville, was got ready yesterday, and I also ordered out that of my own frigate, as well as the small boat, the command of which I gave to M. Boutin. M. d'Escures, my first lieutenant, Chevalier of the Order of Saint-Louis, took the command of the cutter of the *Boussole*, and of the whole expedition. As his zeal sometimes appeared to me to border on an excess, I thought it prudent to give him his instructions in writing. The details into which I entered respecting the prudence I wished him to observe in the expedition appeared to him so minute, that he asked me if I took him for a child, adding, that he had already commanded vessels. I explained to him in a friendly manner the motive of my orders ; I told him how M. de Langle and myself had sounded the entrance to the bay two days before, and how I had found that the officer in command of the boat which accompanied us had passed in too near the point, and, indeed, had even touched the bottom. I added that young

officers thought it was a proof of pluck, during sieges, to mount the parapet of trenches, and that the same spirit led them, in boating expeditions, to brave the rocks and currents; but that this incautious boldness might have the most fatal consequences in a voyage like ours, in which perils of this kind were of continual occurrence. After this conversation, I handed to him his instructions, which I read to M. Boutin.

“These instructions left me free of all apprehension. They were given to a man thirty-three years old, who had commanded ships of war: how many reasons I had to feel secure!

“Our boats set out, as I had ordered, at six o'clock in the morning. It was as much an excursion of pleasure as of instruction and utility; they could breakfast and hunt in the shade of the trees. To M. d'Escures I joined M. de Pierrevert and M. de Montarnac, the only kinsman I had in the navy, and to whom I was as tenderly attached as if he had been my own son. No young officer ever inspired me with more sanguine hopes, while M. de Pierrevert had already attained that which I constantly awaited from the other.

“The seven best soldiers of the detachment formed the armament of the cutter, in which the chief pilot of my frigate had also embarked to take the soundings. In his smaller boat M. de Boutin's lieutenant was M. Mouton. I knew that the boat of the *Astrolabe* was commanded by M. de Marchainville; but I was ignorant whether it carried any other officers.

“At ten o'clock I saw our small boat returning. Somewhat surprised, because I had not expected it so soon, I asked M. Boutin, before he had come upon deck, if anything had occurred. At the moment I feared an attack by the savages. The arrival of M. Boutin was not calculated to reassure me; the keenest anguish was visible in his countenance. He

speedily informed me of the catastrophe he had just witnessed, and had escaped only because the firmness of his character had enabled him to discern the resource available in the moment of peril. Dragged, while following his commander, into the midst of the breakers which hurtled in the channel, where the tide ran with a velocity of three to four leagues the hour, he conceived the idea of bringing the stern of his boat to the waves; and the boat, in this way, being driven forward by the waves, and yielding to their impetus, was prevented from filling, while the tide, as it receded, necessarily carried it outside. Soon he discovered the breakers in front, and found himself in the open sea. More anxious for the safety of his comrades than for his own, he kept as near the breakers as he could, in the hope of saving some of them; he even ventured into the swirling eddies, but was forced back by the tide. He climbed on M. Mouton's shoulders, in order to command a wider prospect. Vain hope! all had been swallowed up.

"The sea having completely subsided, one of the officers had cherished a belief in the safety of the *Astrolabe's* cutter; he had seen only our own go down. At this moment M. de Marchainville was fully a quarter of a league from the scene of danger, and in a sea as smooth as the surface of the best sheltered haven; but our young officer, impelled by a generous emotion undoubtedly imprudent—because, in the circumstances, all succour was impossible—by the generosity of a lofty soul, and by a courage too great to be capable of reflection when his friends were in such great peril, flew to their help, dashed into the very breakers, and, a victim to his own generosity and his chief's disobedience, perished with him.

"It was not long before M. de Langle arrived on board my ship, not less overwhelmed with grief than myself, and informed me, while tears streamed down his face, that the mis-

LOSS OF THE TWO BOATS IN THE PORT DES FRANÇAIS.



fortune was even greater than I had thought. Since our departure from France, he had made it a rule never to send the two brothers, Messieurs La Borde-Marchainville and La Borde-Boutervilliers, in the same expedition, and on this one occasion only had he yielded to their strong desire to go on shore and hunt together : for it was almost from this point of view that both of us had regarded the excursion of our boats, which we thought as safe as in the roadstead of Brest when the weather is at its fairest.

“The savages in their canoes now came to acquaint us with the disaster ; by signs they made known that they had seen the two boats go down, and that all help was impossible. We loaded them with presents, and endeavoured to make them understand that all our wealth would be poured out upon him who should save a single man.

“Nothing was better calculated to move their humanity ; they ran along the margin of the sea, and spread themselves on both sides of the bay. I had already sent my long-boat, commanded by M. de Clonard, to the east shore, where, if any one, contrary to all appearance, had had the good fortune to save himself, it was probable he would land. M. de Langle kept to the westward, so as to leave no part of the coast unexplored ; and I remained on board, watching over the safety of the two ships, with crews of sufficient strength to prevent all fear of the savages, against whom prudence required we should be always on our guard. Nearly all the officers, and many other persons, had accompanied Messieurs de Langle and Clonard ; they explored the beach for three leagues, but not even the smallest relic of the boats had been thrown up. Nevertheless, I had cherished a vague feeling of hope ; it is with difficulty the mind accustoms itself to so sudden a change from happiness to profound distress ; but the return of the boats destroyed the illusion, and overwhelmed

me with a despair which the strongest expressions could but imperfectly indicate.

“There remained for us nothing more but to quit as speedily as possible a shore which had proved so fatal ; but the delay of a few days was due to the families of our unfortunate friends. Too hasty a departure would have awakened disquietude and doubt in Europe. Before sailing, we erected on the island in the middle of the bay, which I had named Sepulchre Island, a monument to the memory of our unfortunate companions. M. de Lamanon composed an inscription, which he buried in a bottle at the foot of the memorial.”

It is known that in the course of his voyage, La Pérouse, while completing his exploration of the Navigator's Islands of Bougainville, lost his companion and friend, M. de Langle, who was murdered by the savages, along with several of the crew of the boats under his command. In this affray the naturalist of the expedition also perished. The spot where it took place is still called Massacre Bay. In December 1787, La Pérouse called at the Friendly Islands; subsequently he touched at Norfolk Island; and in January 1788, he visited Botany Bay, where a British colony had recently been founded by Governor Philip. The last despatches which the French Minister of Marine received from this able and accomplished man, but most unfortunate navigator, were dated from the new settlement, February 7, 1788.

Three years passed away, and no further intelligence of the expedition reached Europe. In January 1791, the Paris Society of Natural History, giving expression to the general anxiety, petitioned the National Assembly to authorize the fitting-out of some ships in search of the missing explorers.

The necessary decree was speedily obtained, and in pursuance of it a couple of frigates, the *Recherche* and the *Espérance*, were got ready ; their command being intrusted to Rear-Admiral Bruni d'Entrecasteaux, who hoisted his flag in the *Recherche*.

The expedition sailed from Brest on the 28th of September 1791. It had gathered no tidings of La Pérouse, when D'Entrecasteaux died of scurvy, after a voyage of about two years' duration, in which the captain of the *Espérance*, Huon de Kermadec, had also succumbed. The two ships, under Captains d'Auribeau and De Rossel, continued their fruitless search until October 1793, when, putting into Java, they were captured by the Dutch, who were then engaged in war with France.

Further measures on the part of the French Government were prevented by the outbreak of the Revolution, and the political storms which followed in rapid succession ; the death of Louis XVI., the Reign of Terror, the rise of Napoleon, the Hundred Days and the Battle of Waterloo, and the Bourbon restoration. For many years only some vague rumours were circulated by ships which had traversed the Southern waters. But, in 1826, Captain Dillon, who had already made several voyages in Oceania, having touched at Tucopia Island, near the Fiji Archipelago, found in the hands of a native a silver sword-handle, engraved with a cipher which he took to be that of La Pérouse. When asked how he had become possessed of the article, the savage replied, that it came, with many others of European manufacture, from a remote island named Vanikoro, near which two great ships had long ago been wrecked. This information, and the numerous relics he discovered in addition to the sword-handle, convinced Captain Dillon that the castaway ships were those of La Pérouse. Owing to a sudden calm, and afterwards to contrary winds,

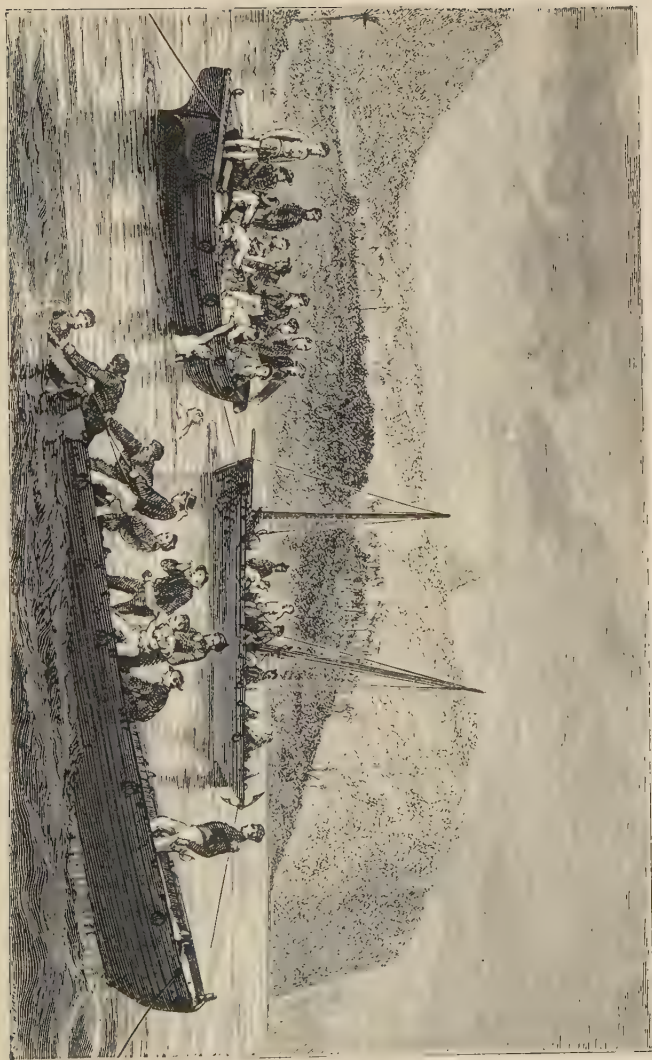
he was unable to sail for Vanikoro;* but on putting in at Pondicherry, he lost no time in making known his discoveries to the Governor of Bengal, who, after examining the sword-handle, came to the conclusion, from its form and the cipher engraved upon it, that it had belonged to La Pérouse himself.

Relying on the decree of the National Assembly, already alluded to, which enjoined upon the French ambassadors, consuls, and other agents in foreign countries, to invite, in the name of humanity, the arts, and sciences, the sovereigns of those countries to order their navigators and savants to inquire in all possible ways after the fate of the *Boussole* and the *Astrolabe*, the East India Company accepted Captain Dillon's proposal, and gave him the command of a vessel, the *Research*, with instructions to visit Vanikoro, and collect what information he could about the unfortunate La Pérouse.

The *Research* reached Vanikoro on the 8th of September 1827, and Captain Dillon set to work, with much zeal, to accumulate all the relics of the shipwreck he could secure. The most important were a large bronze bell, bearing the trade-mark of the Brest foundry, a theodolite, four swivel guns, and a portion of the carved figure-head of one of the frigates. From the natives he gathered several versions of the story of the catastrophe, the leading facts of which are embodied in the following summary.

Many years before, two large ships had arrived off their island, and cast anchor. During a violent gale, one of them drifted on the reefs and foundered. The other was cast on the rocks near Païou. The white men who escaped from the disaster remained for some time on the island, and out of the

* Vanikoro, Vanicolo, or Pitt's Island, in the South Pacific Ocean, lat. $11^{\circ} 36' 30''$ S., long. $166^{\circ} 53' 24''$ E. It is thirty miles in circuit, lofty, and well wooded. Its culminating point, Mount Kapogo, is 3000 feet high.



wreck of the frigate built a small bark. These strangers were spirits, who made signs to the sun and the moon ; an allusion to their astronomical observations. As soon as their little bark was finished, they all went on board, and were never more heard of. The memorials in Captain Dillon's possession had belonged to the wrecked vessel, from which the natives had obtained them by diving, at low water, until it was completely broken up.

They conducted the captain to the scene of the wreck, where he discovered a few pieces of iron. His persevering inquiries resulted in a conviction that the relics he had bought from the people of Vanikoro had belonged to the ship of La Pérouse. He carried them to France, where Charles X. rewarded him with the Cross of the Legion of Honour, and granted him a pension, in return for the outlay he had incurred.

Dumont d'Urville, who, in 1826, had been despatched in another *Astrolabe* to explore the comparatively unknown waters of Oceania, and to seek some traces of La Pérouse, heard at Hobart Town, in Tasmania, of Captain Dillon's discoveries at Vanikoro. He immediately sailed for that island, where he arrived on the 21st of February 1828, and proceeded to examine its reefs and rocks, and to gather up every tradition of the disaster. The fact of the shipwreck was soon conclusively established, and M. Jacquinot, D'Urville's lieutenant, obtained from the natives some interesting particulars.

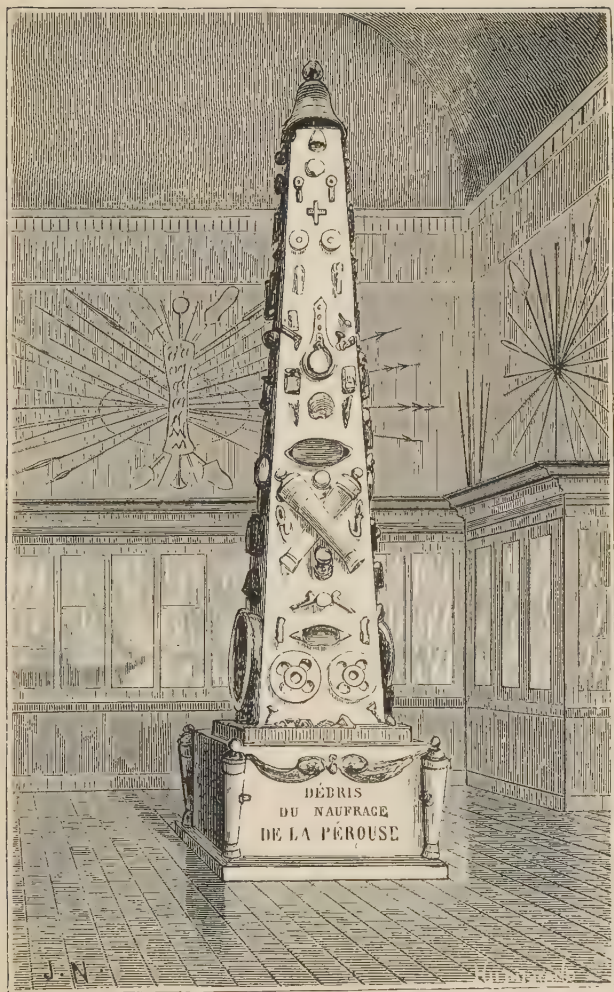
We take the following extract from Dumont d'Urville's narrative of his voyage :—

On quitting Wanou, he says, M. Jacquinot made for Nama, a village situated about two miles further. There he received a more cordial welcome than at Wanou ; but all his questions, promises, and exertions at first were fruitless. M. Jacquinot was thinking of continuing his journey towards Païou, when

he bethought himself of exhibiting a piece of red cloth. The sight of so splendid an article produced such an effect on the mind of one of the natives, that he immediately leaped into the French boat, and offered, if it were given him, to conduct M. Jacquinot to the place of the shipwreck. The bargain was at once concluded.

The chain of reefs which forms, as it were, an immense girdle around Vanikoro, with a channel between varying from two to three miles in breadth, near Païou, and in front of a place named Ambi, approaches within about a mile of the coast. It was here, in a kind of gap in the midst of the breakers, that the savage checked the progress of the boat, and signed to the French to look into the water. At a depth of twelve or fifteen feet, they distinguished, scattered here and there, and embedded in coral, anchors, cannons, bullets, and various other objects, especially numerous plates of lead. All doubts were immediately dissipated; the French were convinced that the melancholy relics which met their gaze were the last memorials of the disaster that had befallen the ships of La Pérouse.

All the relics remaining were of iron, copper, or lead; the wood had completely disappeared, destroyed, no doubt, by weather and the wear and tear of the waves. From the position of the anchors, it was concluded that four had gone down with the ship, but that the two others had been previously run out. The appearances of the locality induced the supposition that the ship had endeavoured to pass through the gap into the channel of water within the reef; had struck, and been unable to disengage herself. According to some of the natives, the ship belonged to the crew who had got ashore at Païou, and there built a small bark; while her consort had been wrecked outside of the reef, and had sunk immediately, with all on board.



RELICS OF LA PEROUSE IN THE MUSEUM OF THE LOUVRE.

M. Jacquinot contrived to raise from its coral bed an anchor weighing 1800 pounds, a cast-iron cannon, and two swivel guns of bronze. Before quitting the dangerous reefs of Vanikoro and its unhealthy shore, where epidemic fevers had already struck down one-half his crew, Dumont d'Urville, though sick himself, erected in honour of La Pérouse a modest monument, on which was carved the following inscription :—
“ *A la mémoire de La Pérouse et de ses compagnons.—L’Astrolabe, 14 mars 1828.*” (To the memory of La Pérouse and his companions.—The *Astrolabe*, March 14, 1828.)

At the entrance of the Marine Museum of the Louvre, in Paris, the stranger observes with peculiar interest a pyramidal column, decorated with the relics of the shipwreck that, more than his gallant deeds or his geographical discoveries, has perpetuated the name and fame of La Pérouse. Weakness is generally unfortunate ; and whoever studies the narrative of his expedition will be disposed, we think, to conclude that, however amiable his character or stainless his courage, he lacked the firmness, decision, and foresight which distinguish the successful navigator. He was not made of the stuff of a Cook, a Vancouver, a Ross, or a Parry.

IX.

LOSS OF THE "PROSERPINE."

February 1799.



THE *Proserpine* was a fine frigate of twenty-eight guns, commanded by Captain James Wallis. She sailed from Yarmouth for Cuxhaven on Monday, the 28th of January 1799, having on board the Honourable Thomas Grenville, with important despatches for the English ambassador at Berlin. On the following Wednesday she was off Heligoland, where she took on board a pilot, and steering for the Red Buoy, cast anchor for the night. The other buoys which marked the mouth of the Elbe having been removed, to prevent the entrance of a hostile fleet, the captain doubted whether it would be safe or prudent to take his vessel up the river ; but the pilot asserted that the attempt might be made without danger, and even guaranteed the safe arrival of the vessel at Cuxhaven, if the captain would proceed only between half ebb and half flood tide. He declared that he was thoroughly acquainted with the water-way ; and that, being able at half tide to make out the situation of the sands, he would steer the ship by certain well-known landmarks.

On the following morning, therefore, the *Proserpine* got under way, and, preceded by the *Prince of Wales* packet,

which had accompanied her from Yarmouth, began her passage up the Elbe.

Until about four in the afternoon all went smoothly. The weather then changed to fog and mist, with a sudden fall of snow; and as the pilot could not see his landmarks, the ship came to her anchor.

Some hours before midnight, a heavy gale came up from the east, accompanied by so dense a storm of snow that the horizon was utterly obscured, and nothing could be seen beyond the ship herself. The tide soon following the direction of the wind, huge masses of ice struck against her stern and broadside; and though all was done that skill could suggest to ward them off, it was with the utmost difficulty the cables were saved from injury, and the *Proserpine* enabled to hold her ground during the night. At length the welcome day arrived, and it was seen that the floating ice had ascended far up the river, and that the *Prince of Wales* packet had gone ashore, but that the water was clear all below the *Proserpine* and in the offing. Captain Wallis, therefore, determined not to attempt the passage of the Elbe; but got his ship again under way, and stood out to sea, with the view of landing Mr. Grenville, whose mission was of no small importance, on some part of the coast of Jutland.

The frigate, with no other canvas than her fore-topmast stay-sail, ran along merrily before a strong wind. All danger was supposed to be past, when, about half-past nine o'clock, the crew being below at breakfast, she struck with immense violence on the Scharhow, about six miles north-west of Newark Island. Captain Wallis immediately ordered soundings to be taken. They showed only ten feet of water. He then ordered out the boats to carry an anchor to some convenient point of the shore; but the shoal-ice returned so

rapidly that this could not be done. He then summoned all hands to buttress up the ship with strong timbers, that she might heel towards the bank, and not fall into the impetuous current. In this attempt they succeeded; and when the tide ebbed, the ship, very fortunately, still maintained her position. But the next tide brought up with it huge masses of ice, which carried away the shores, stripped the copper off the starboard quarter, and cut the rudder clean in two. Not despairing of saving his frigate at high-tide, Captain Wallis proceeded to lighten her. Most of the guns and a considerable portion of the stores were thrown overboard, and casks of wines and spirits stove in. It is much to the credit of the men, however, that notwithstanding the opportunity thus offered, not a single case of intoxication occurred.

At high-water, however, it was found that no chance of saving the vessel existed. When the hour of flood arrived, which was not before ten o'clock at night, the heavy southeasterly gale kept back the tide so effectually, that the water round her was three feet less in depth than at the moment when she struck. "The situation of all on board," we are told, "was now most critical, and the sufferings of the crew were dreadful. They could only expect that, when the tide ebbed, the ship would be rent in pieces by the shocks of the floating ice. The night was bitterly cold; all around was veiled in impenetrable darkness; and the fast-falling snow, beating against their faces, wrapped them in its icy folds. The decks were so slippery that it was scarcely possible to stand, much less to take active exercise; and all they could do was to crouch under any sheltering object, and screen themselves as best they might from the driving blast. Thus passed the fearful night; and when at last the morning broke, it brought little relief, for now the wind had increased, the ice-drift had reached as high as the cabin-windows, and, from the

concussion of the heavy masses, the ship had suffered so much that it appeared to every one but too certain that she would soon go to pieces."

Mr. Grenville now suggested that the crew, as the sole means of escape which remained to them, should make an attempt to cross the ice to Newark Island. Captain Wallis could not but think the attempt most desperate, for the island was six miles distant: they had no guides; the fog was dense, and the snow fell heavily: still he gave his consent to its being made. He divided the crew into four companies, each under the command of an officer; the men who were least overcome by fatigue and cold were chosen to carry planks for the purpose of bridging any dangerous chasms in the ice; while others, as an additional precaution, carried a long rope, as is the custom of the Alpine mountaineers. Each man also took with him a supply of provisions.

They began their perilous journey at half-past one on Saturday afternoon, and by three o'clock the ship was wholly deserted, Captain Wallis and Lieutenant Ridley of the marines being the last to quit her deck. Their course lay in the very teeth of the wind, which blew the sharp icicles and blinding snowflakes in their faces, until from hair and eyebrows a solid fringe of ice depended. The drifting, whirling, dazzling snow insensibly diverted them from their route, and for a while they were actually travelling towards the sea; but they were saved from this fatal error by consulting a pocket-compass which one of the party fortunately carried with him. And so through the long and weary hours they plodded onwards; now waist-deep in the snow-wreaths, now wading through deep pools of water, now scaling huge blocks of ice. Two of the company were women; one of whom had scarcely ever been on board a ship until the day before the *Proserpine* sailed from Yarmouth. This unfortunate creature, the wife

of one of the sailors, had given birth to a still-born child the first day the ship had been at sea, and now, in her enfeebled condition, was forced to traverse the ice in the face of driving snow and an ice-cold wind. The other woman was strong and healthy, and accustomed to a seafaring life. She had with her a healthy infant of nine months old. It is singular to relate that, though the strong mother and her strong child were both frozen to death in the course of this perilous journey, the frail invalid survived every trial, and safely arrived at Newark. Here they were received with the warmest hospitality, and received such shelter as the villagers' scanty huts could afford them.

On the following morning, when the muster-roll was called, Captain Wallis found that of the whole of the frigate's company, amounting to about three hundred souls, only twelve seamen, and the woman and child already mentioned, were missing. Many of the survivors suffered severely from being frost-bitten, but all of these ultimately recovered.

The storm of wind and snow lasted until the 5th of February, the crew in the meantime being in great straits for want of proper food and clothing. Their supplies were nearly exhausted, and the few needy inhabitants of the village could not replace them. It was indispensable, therefore, that at least a part of them should proceed to Cuxhaven.

Having secured the services of some of the islanders as guides, they accordingly set out, at eight o'clock on the morning of the 6th, accompanied by Mr. Grenville, with the members of the embassy, and some of their servants. No less difficult and dangerous this journey by land than their perilous passage of the ice. Up to their waists in water, they forded a river of considerable width; incurring great risk from drifting masses of ice, and struggling hard against an impetu-

ous tide. In the evening, however, they reached Cuxhaven, without the loss of a man.

Meantime, Captain Wallis, with a party of officers and men, had remained at Newark, in the hope of saving a portion of the ship's stores. On the 8th, he despatched the master, Mr. Anthony, with a small company, to fetch bread, of which they were greatly in want, and to ascertain the condition of the vessel. They reached the ship with much difficulty, to find her almost a wreck, lying on her beam-ends, with seven or eight feet of water in her hold, her timbers crashed and shattered, and her framework kept together only by the pressure of the ice, in which she lay as in a mould. Such being her condition, Captain Wallis thought it unadvisable to incur the risk of a second visit. But on the 10th the weather had so greatly cleared, that he consented to the departure of Mr. Anthony, the surgeon, the boatswain, one midshipman, and a couple of sailors. To the serious alarm of their commander, they did not return during the day, and when night came on they were still absent. Captain Wallis hoped that they had remained on board as a measure of precaution; but during the night a violent storm arose, and when in the morning he looked towards the wreck—her place was vacant!

Captain Wallis describes the event, and the feelings it awakened, in the following letter to Vice-Admiral Dickson:—

“They got on board, but unfortunately neglected, until too late in the tide, to return, which left them no alternative but that of remaining on board till the next day. About ten o'clock at night the wind came on at south-south-east, and blew a most violent storm; the tide, though at the neap, rose to an uncommon height; the ice got in motion, the velocity of which swept the ship to destruction (for in the morning not a vestige of her was to be seen), and with it, I am miserably

afraid, went the unfortunate officers and men,—and if so, their loss will be a great one to the service, as, in their different departments, they were a great acquisition to it.

“The only hope I have is, that the Providence which has so bountifully assisted us in our recent dangers and difficulties, may be extended towards them so as to preserve their lives, by means of a boat or otherwise ; but I am very sorry to say my hopes are founded on the most distant degree of human probability. This melancholy accident happening so unexpectedly, added to my other misfortunes, has given so severe a shock to my health and spirits, as to prevent me hitherto undertaking the journey to Cuxhaven, where the survivors of the ship’s company now are, except a few who are here with me, with whom I shall set out as soon as we are able.”

The melancholy forebodings of Captain Wallis, however, were not realized. It afterwards appeared that Mr. Anthony and his companions had reached the wreck at ten in the morning, and immediately addressed themselves to the task of collecting the necessary stores. While thus occupied, they neglected to watch the tide, and it was not until too late they discovered that a sea of boiling water cut off their return, and that they must pass the night on board.

During the night the wind changed to south-south-east, and blew with great violence ; the tide was so high that it floated off the ship and the belt of ice which encumbered her ; and in the morning, to their horror, they found themselves drifting to seaward. They were but six in number, and wholly unable to control the movements of a large frigate, even if she kept afloat ; while the probability was, that if the ice which buoyed her up was washed away, she would founder at once. It is not the habit of our “hearts of oak,” however, to yield in idle despondency to any peril. Englishmen must do,

or die ; at all events, they must *do before* they die,—must have one stern wrestle with fate before they own themselves conquered. This indomitable resolution runs in the blood of the race ; the Englishman, says Henri Taine, is the active, energetic human being, capable of enterprise, of exertion, of endurance, of perseverance, and who loves effort as effort. So our six men flung despondency to the winds, and set to work : they sounded, and found eleven fathoms of water between the ice ; they fired minute-guns to bring to their succour any passing vessel ; they rigged and manned the pumps ; and, in order to lighten the vessel, threw overboard nearly all the remaining guns. Next they got ready the tackles for lowering the boat ; and this continuous occupation, together with an abundant supply of provisions, braced up their nerves, and kept up in them a healthful spirit of resolution and perseverance.

On the morning of Tuesday, the 12th, they sighted land on their lee, and hoisted signals of distress, and fired several guns, in the hope that assistance might reach them from the shore. None came : and soon afterwards the unfortunate *Proserpine* struck upon a rock, about a mile and a half from the island of Baltrum. They then attempted to launch the cutter, but were baffled by the immense number of pieces of drift-ice. After spending another night on board, they made, on the morning of the 13th, a second and more successful effort to launch the boat, in which they embarked without delay, and pulled for land. When they neared the shore, they found the ice so thick that they were forced to drag the boat over it ; and this toil soon proving beyond their strength, they abandoned the boat, and gained the shore by leaping from block to block. The inhabitants of the country received them with kindness, but seemed to regard the wrecked ship

as lawful loot. They thoroughly stripped it of arms, stores, and provisions, giving a supply of the latter to the six Englishmen.

On the 16th, the estuary and river of the Elbe were sufficiently free from ice to admit of their sailing for Cuxhaven. They started in the cutter, which had fortunately been recovered, and arrived in safety on the 22nd. There they found the party who had accompanied Mr. Grenville from Cuxhaven; and on the following day welcomed the arrival of Captain Wallis and the remainder of the *Proserpine's* crew. The astonishment and delight of their commander at recovering those whose supposed loss he had so sincerely deplored, are not readily to be expressed in words.

Thus, with a loss of only fourteen of their number, the frigate's crew were once more assembled together, after enduring a series of extraordinary and severe trials. It speaks highly for the discipline and self-control of English seamen, that through the whole course of their adventures not one was heard to complain, not one was known to disobey an order. Their courage never quailed, their resolution never gave way; and it was to their serene fortitude and persevering energy that they owed, under Divine Providence, their deliverance from so many perils.

As soon as the navigation of the Elbe was completely clear, they were despatched by different packets to England, where they all arrived in safety.

X.

LOSS OF THE "SCEPTRE."

November 1799.



THE *Sceptre*, a sixty-four-gun ship, commanded by Captain Valentine Edwards, sailed from the Cape of Good Hope in the spring of 1799, in charge of a large convoy of transports and merchantmen conveying to Bombay war *matériel* and stores for use in the siege of Seringapatam. She had on board Sir David Baird and the whole of the 84th Regiment. Yet she was in every sense unfitted for the service on which she was ordered. Having been a long time stationed at the Cape, she had become "so weak and leaky" as to be hardly seaworthy.*

Her bad condition, however, was so well known to her captain and officers that they watched her every movement with the closest attention ; and about two-thirds of the voyage had been accomplished in safety, when one night a strong wind arose, and increased so rapidly in violence that the officers of the watch felt some anxiety on account of the unusual strain upon the ship. Captain Edwards ordered the well to be sounded ; and the result confirming his fears, he ordered the pumps to be manned and worked immediately.

* Gilly, "Shipwrecks of the Royal Navy," p. 27.

They were not able, however, to keep down the water, which, while the men relieved each other, rose several inches. Happily the wind went down as suddenly as it had risen ; and after many hours of severe toil, the water was got under, and the vessel rendered comparatively safe.

Had the *Sceptre* gone down that night, says Mr. Gilly, hundreds and hundreds of England's best and bravest defenders must have sunk into a watery grave ; and, in all probability, the enemy's ships, which were hovering upon the track of the convoy, would have captured the transports and merchantmen, thereby imperilling the success of our arms in India.

A few weeks later the *Sceptre* with her convoy arrived safely at Bombay. She was then put into dock and repaired ; and was strengthened by large timbers, technically termed *riders*, being bolted diagonally on either side, fore and aft. When again made fit for sea, she returned to Table Bay, where she anchored about the middle of October.

"On the 1st of November the captain and officers gave a ball to the inhabitants of Cape Town ; and on that night the ship presented an appearance of unusual gaiety. Mirth and music resounded on all sides. In place of the stern voice of command, the laugh, the jest, and the soft tones of woman's voice were heard ; whilst many a light footstep glided over the decks of the old ship.

" ' The lamps shone o'er fair women and brave men ;
A thousand hearts beat happily ; and when
Music arose with its voluptuous swell,
Soft eyes looked love to eyes that spake again,
And all went merry as a marriage-bell.' "

"The night was calm and beautiful ; and as the guests left the ship, little did they think of the fearful doom that was so soon to overwhelm many of those whose hands they had clasped for the last time."



TABLE BAY.

On the morning of the 5th of November a strong gale was blowing from the north-west, but no danger was anticipated ; and the ship, gaily dressed in flags, and with the royal standard at her main-top mast-head, fired her salute at noon in commemoration of the discovery of the Gunpowder Plot.

By two o'clock the gale had greatly increased ; and as Table Bay affords no shelter from a north-west wind, the captain took every precaution his long experience could suggest for his vessel's safety. Top-masts were struck, and the fore and main yard lowered, to ease the ship. But in less than half an hour the storm had so increased in violence that the *Sceptre* parted from her best bower-cable. The sheet-anchor was immediately let go, and the cable veered away to twenty-eight fathoms. Still the storm gathered strength, and at half-past six it seemed as if the entire fury of the elements had concentrated itself in one tremendous blast.

Captain Edwards immediately ordered the anchor to be let go, with a couple of the fore-castle guns attached ; but even this proved insufficient to hold the ship.

One of the boats was then hoisted out for the purpose of communicating with the *Jupiter*—another man-of-war then lying in Table Bay—and procuring the end of a cable from her ; but in a few minutes the boat capsized, and all the crew were drowned. For some hours signal-guns of distress had been fired, and the ensign hoisted downwards ; but no succour could reach the vessel, because in such a tempestuous sea no boat could live. Some of the officers who had gone on shore the previous evening stood on the beach amazed and appalled, compelled to remain inactive spectators of the terrible scene, and to see their goodly vessel foundering at her anchors.

About eight o'clock, loud above the roar of the tempest and the clang of the minute-gun, rose the wild shout of " Fire !" and the thick smoke, as it surged through the

hatches, could be discerned from the shore. Thus were the opposing elements of air, fire, and water combined in their assault on the ill-fated vessel. For a moment all stood paralyzed, overcome by the immensity of their despair; then the voices of the officers were heard in quick command, and every sailor stood ready at his post.

The smoke ascended from the hatches in such dense volumes that all attempts to go below to get at the fire were useless. Each man felt, as he looked on the burning ship and the raging waters, that his last hour was come—that either to stay or go was equally fatal. And meanwhile the ship drifted at the mercy of the waves until near ten o'clock, when she stranded, broadside to the shore, heeling on her port side towards the sea.

The captain then ordered the main and mizzen masts to be cut away, and soon afterwards the fore-mast went by the board. At this crisis a man named Conolly, a favourite both with crew and officers, volunteered to jump overboard with a deep-sea line attached to his body, in order to establish a communication between the ship and the shore. He made a few strokes, and disappeared.

The ship, being lightened by the fall of the masts, righted herself, and got clear off the ground. Some slight chance of preservation now seemed visible; and every heart was buoyed up with hope that she might be thrown high enough upon the beach to enable the people on shore to render some assistance.

Nearer and yet nearer drove the *Sceptre*. Voices became more and more audible, so as even to be recognized. A few minutes more, and all would be safe! No: a heavy billow fell crushingly upon the ship; the orlop deck gave way, the port side fell in. Many were swept overboard; the survivors rushed to the starboard side.

Not a few, delirious with despair, leaped overboard, and attempted to swim ashore ; but the eddy caused by the wreck was so very strong that they were carried out to sea, and, in spite of the attempts made by those on board to rescue them, they all perished. Mr. Tucker, a midshipman, lost his life in endeavouring to reach the bow of the ship.

About half an hour later the poop was washed away, and carried towards the shore. Seventy or eighty men who were upon it seemed likely to be saved from the surrounding destruction. The people on the beach crowded to the spot where they thought the wreck would be driven ; but keen was their suffering when they saw a tremendous wave strike the poop, capsize it, and roll it over and over, while every man who clung to it perished.

But the tragedy was not yet ended ; the last scene had still to come. The wreck, to which a few officers and men were still convulsively clinging, heeled towards the shore. Almost simultaneously the gale blew with redoubled violence. It fell off again, cloven fore and aft, and literally split open in two places—before the main-chains and abaft the fore-chains. Then it vanished from the sight of the awe-stricken spectators on the beach.

Loud above the crash of timbers and the roar of the gale rose the last agony shriek of hundreds of human beings, as they sank in the angry waters, and whose mangled bodies, with spar and plank and timber, strewed the beach for miles on the following morning.

Thirty or forty seamen and marines still clung to the bow, the waves continuously breaking over them. They kept their hold, however, in the fond hope that the remaining signal-gun might, by its weight, prevent the bow from capsizing ; but the timbers, unable to withstand the fury of the

tempest, suddenly parted, the gun reeled from side to side, and the unhappy men shared the fate of their companions. It is recorded that, during that awful time, while threatened with instant death, many of these men were lost in stupor, with their hands locked in the chain plates.

Among the remarkable incidents connected with this dreadful calamity, we may mention the escape of Mr. Buddle, a midshipman. He was cast upon the waves in an almost insensible condition. He had not strength to strike out for the beach, and therefore he simply sought to keep himself above water. This proved the means of saving his life, for he floated in a direction parallel with the shore, and avoided the huge pieces of wreck by which all his companions, except three, in their struggle to reach the land, were crushed and mutilated.

Mr. Buddle was nearly exhausted, when he grasped a small spar or plank that floated near him. A projecting nail wounded him in the breast. He fainted, and did not recover his senses until he found himself on the beach, and amid a pile of the dead. In vain he attempted to rise; for though he felt no pain, his left leg was broken, his knee cut almost half through, and his body severely bruised. In this state he was discovered, and carried by some good Samaritans within the influence of a huge fire, until additional assistance could be obtained; and then he was conveyed to the hospital.

One of the officers of the *Sceptre*, who was still living when Mr. Gilly wrote,* and chanced to be on shore at the time this terrible calamity occurred, declared that its horrors far surpassed the most awful dreams of an excited imagination. When the first signals of distress were made from the flagship, the inhabitants of Cape Town, and the officers and

* Gilly, "Shipwrecks of the Royal Navy," pp. 30-35.

WRECK OF THE "SCEPTRE."



soldiers of the garrison, rushed down to the beach in the vain hope of rendering some assistance. It was an ice-cold night ; the gale raged with uncontrollable fury ; the sea broke in billows of foam and spray on the echoing beach. These circumstances were sufficient in themselves to appall the mind of every spectator ; but the dreadful impression deepened as night approached, and darkness concealed the ship from their straining gaze. They could only tell she was still alive by the ominous boom of her minute-guns ; they could only conjecture her fate by the shriek of some poor drowning wretch as he sank into the tumult of the waters.

There was little for the spectators to do ; human help was ineffectual ; but what *could* be done, they *did*. They kindled huge fires along the beach, to guide any castaway who might succeed in gaining the shore. Their spreading glare in time enabled each anxious eye to perceive that the ship was driving rapidly towards the land. She appeared, it is said, like a huge castle looming in the distance. The hopes of the spectators revived as her form became more and more clearly visible ; and they all stood ready to give such succour as might be possible. Then came a deadly crash, followed by one loud cry of agony, the cry of human anguish in its last supreme moment ; and the light of the torches waved around showed them the forms of many a gallant seaman struggling vainly with the rush of the billows, or whirled to and fro amongst floating masses of wreck, which proved not less fatal than the furious waves themselves !

All the help the people on shore could give was to seize the occasion when the inrush of the tide brought some poor fellow within their reach, and then to rush into the water, holding one another at arm's-length, and bring him safely to land before the receding wave had time to carry him back into destruction.

In this manner forty-seven men were saved, together with Mr. Shaw, a master's mate, and two midshipmen, Messrs. Spinks and Buddle. Six officers were, fortunately for themselves, on shore at the time; all the others, together with the captain, were lost on the wreck, and no fewer than two hundred and ninety seamen and marines.

The inhabitants of Cape Town, and the soldiers of the garrison, were employed all night in searching for the dead. Amongst them was discovered the son of Captain Edwards, with one hand grasping an open Bible, which was pressed tightly to his bosom. Who knows but it may have been the gift of a beloved mother, who had taught him to prize the promises God's holy Word conveys to every faithful soul? Who knows but that he may have derived from its sweet sayings that living faith and assured hope which strengthen the soul in the valley of the shadow of death?

It is recorded that three waggon-loads of dead bodies were conveyed, on the following morning, to a place near the hospital, and decently interred. The remains of all the officers, with the exception of the captain, were found on the wreck-strewn beach; and, when Sunday came, they were solemnly buried with the usual military honours.

XI.

LOSS OF THE "QUEEN CHARLOTTE."

March 1800.

" Howe made the Frenchmen dance a tune,
An admiral great and glorious ;
Witness for that the First of June—
Lord, how he was victorious !"



O sings our only naval bard, Charles Dibdin ; and on that famous First of June 1794, when Lord Howe inflicted a severe defeat on the French force under Villaret-Joyeuse, his flag flew on board one of the noblest three-deckers in the British navy, the *Queen Charlotte*, one hundred guns.

Six years later, this vessel was selected as his flag-ship by Lord Keith, then in command of the Mediterranean fleet, and cruising off the Italian coast. On the 16th of March 1800, he landed at Leghorn, for the purpose of communicating with the Austrian authorities, leaving instructions with Captain Todd to get the flag-ship under way, and reconnoitre the island of Cabrera, which was occupied by the French.

On the following morning, the 17th, the *Queen Charlotte* was about ten or twelve miles from Leghorn. The wind was fair, and the sea rippled with a gentle swell. Suddenly arose a cry of " Fire !" The peril of the flag-ship was speedily discovered from the shore, and boats were immediately despatched to her assistance ; though many were prevented from

approaching the wreck by the successive firing of her guns, which were all ready-shotted, and, when heated by the flames, cast destruction on every side.

The most accurate narrative of the disaster is given by Mr. Baird, the carpenter of the *Queen Charlotte* :—

“ At about twenty minutes after six in the morning, as I was dressing myself, I heard throughout the ship a cry of ‘ Fire ! ’ I immediately ran up the after-ladder to get upon deck, and found the whole half-deck, the front bulk-head of the admiral’s cabin, the main-mast’s coat, and the boat’s covering on the booms, all in flames ; which, from every report and probability, I apprehend was occasioned by some hay which was lying under the half-deck having been set on fire by a match in a tub, which was usually kept there for signal-guns.

“ The main-sail at this time was set, and almost entirely caught fire ; the people not being able to come to the clew-garnets * on account of the flames.”

The carpenter immediately went to the fore-castle, and found Lieutenant Dundas and the boatswain encouraging the people to get water to extinguish the fire. He applied to Mr. Dundas, seeing no other officer in the fore-part of the ship (and being unable to see any one on the quarter-deck, from the flames and smoke between), to give him assistance to drown the lower-decks, and secure the hatches to prevent the fire falling down.

Lieutenant Dundas himself accordingly went down with as many people as he could prevail upon to follow him ; and the lower-deck ports were opened, the scuppers plugged, the main and fore hatches secured, the cocks turned and water drawn in at the ports, and the pumps kept going by the

* Ropes for hauling up the clews, or lower corners, of the main and fore sails to their yards.

people who came down, as long as they could stand at them.

“I think,” continues Mr. Baird, “that by these exertions the lower-deck was kept from fire, and the magazines preserved for a long time free from danger. Nor did Lieutenant Dundas or myself quit this station, but we remained there with all the people who could be prevailed upon to stay, till several of the middle-deck guns came through that deck.

“About nine o’clock, Lieutenant Dundas, finding it impossible to remain any longer below, went out at the foremast lower-deck port, and got upon the forecastle, upon which I apprehend there were then about one hundred and fifty of the people drawing water, and throwing it as far aft as possible upon the fire.

“I continued about an hour upon the forecastle; but finding all efforts to extinguish the flames unavailing, I jumped from the jib-boom, and swam to an American boat approaching the ship, by which I was picked up, and put into a boat then in the charge of Lieutenant Stewart, who had come off to the assistance of the ship.”

Captain Todd and Mr. Bainbridge, the first lieutenant, remained upon deck to the last, heedless of their own safety, and occupied in giving directions for the safety of the crew. The former, before he perished, calmly sat down and recorded in writing the particulars of the calamity, for the information of Lord Keith, giving copies of his statement to different seamen, with a request that whoever might escape would deliver it to the admiral. Both he and his lieutenant perished on board, dying in the service of their country as certainly, and, let us say, as gloriously, as if they had fallen in the hour of victorious battle.

No fewer than six hundred and seventy-three officers, seamen, marines, and boys, were lost on this melancholy occasion.

One hundred and sixty-seven were saved from the burning wreck by the boats that put off to their assistance. Eleven of the ship's complement were in attendance on the admiral at Leghorn. And "not only did England lose these valuable and lamented lives, but a noble vessel—one of the largest and finest in her navy—well found and fully equipped, and hallowed, so to speak, by her associations with one of England's greatest victories at sea!" *

* "Famous Ships of the British Navy," p. 180.

XII.

LOSS OF THE "LADY HOBART."

June 1802.

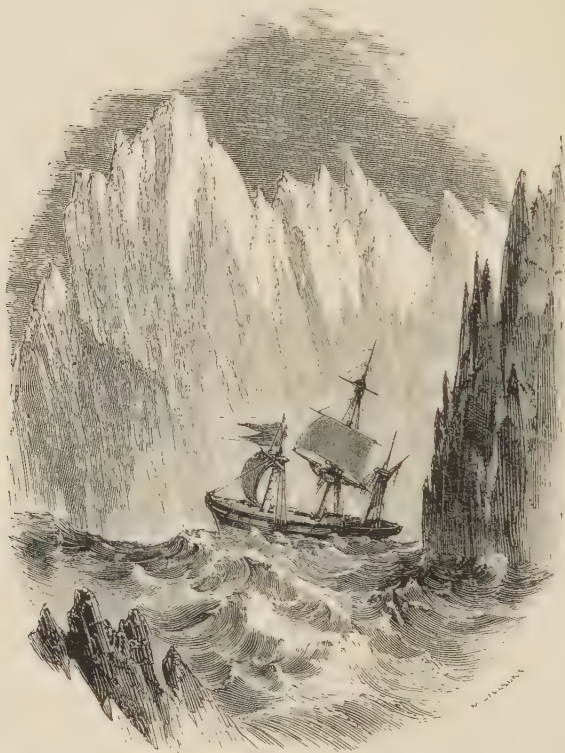


THE *Lady Hobart* mail-packet, Captain Fellowes, sailed from Halifax in Nova Scotia on the 22nd of June 1802; and about one o'clock in the morning of the 29th, when she was going at the rate of seven knots an hour, struck with such tremendous force against an iceberg, that several of her crew were thrown out of their hammocks; and though, by dint of indefatigable exertions, the crew and passengers were saved, the ship was ultimately lost. The following narrative was drawn up by her commander, and will be read with interest by all who can admire fortitude, courage, and presence of mind under perilous circumstances.

Being roused out of sleep, says the captain,* by the suddenness of the shock, I instantly ran upon deck. The helm being put hard a-port, the ship struck a second time, and then swung round on her keel, her stern-port being stove in, and her rudder carried away, before we could succeed in our attempt to haul her off. At this time the iceberg appeared to hang quite over our head, like a lofty peak, which was at

* "Naval Chronicle," vol. x., p. 182.—We have not followed the captain's language with verbal accuracy.

least twice the height of our mainmast-head; and its length could not have been less than from a quarter to half a mile.



LOSS OF THE "LADY HOBART"

The sea broke over the deck with terrific fury; the water rushing in so fast as to fill the hold in a few minutes. We hove the guns overboard, and cut away the anchors from the bows, to lighten the ship. Next, we got two sails under her bottom to check the leak; kept both pumps going, and baled

with buckets at the main-hatchway, in the hope of preventing her from sinking. But in less than a quarter of an hour she settled down in the water to the fore-chains.

Our situation was now one of extreme danger. Feeling that not a moment's delay must take place in hoisting out the boats, I consulted Captain Thomas, of the Royal Navy, and Mr. Bargus, my master, on the propriety of making further efforts to save the ship; and as I was anxious to preserve the mail, I requested their opinion whether it would be possible to take it into the boats, in the event of our succeeding in getting them over the vessel's side. Both these officers agreed with me that there was no time to lose in hoisting them out; and that, as the vessel was fast settling, our first and sole consideration was to save the lives of those on board.

And here I am called upon to pay that tribute of praise which the steady discipline and good conduct of the crew deserve. From the moment that the ship struck, not a word expressive of any anxiety to quit the wreck was heard. My orders were obeyed with promptitude; and though the danger to life increased as every moment flew by, each man waited for his turn to embark in the boats with a steady composure that could not be surpassed.

Having fortunately succeeded in lowering the cutter and jolly-boat, though the sea ran high, we placed the ladies in the former: one of them, Miss Cotenham, was so alarmed that she sprang from the gunwale, and fell into the bottom of the boat with very considerable violence. Though this accident might have been attended with dangerous consequences to herself and to us all, it was happily free from any ill effects. The few provisions which had been saved from the men's berths were then put into the boats, and these were promptly veered astern. By this time the main-deck forward was under water, and nothing but the quarter-deck remained

visible. I then ordered the crew into the boats; and having previously lashed iron "pigs" of ballast to the mail, it was flung overboard.

The ship was now sinking rapidly. I called out to the men to haul up and take me on board, intending to lower myself from the end of the try-sail-boom into the cutter, to prevent her from dashing against the wreck. I desired Mr. Bargas, who had remained with me on the wreck, to go over first. In this instance, he replied, he begged leave to disobey my orders; he must see me safe on board, before he attempted to go himself. Such conduct at such a moment requires no eulogium; it speaks for itself in its unselfish and heroic intrepidity.

The sea was running so high at the time we hoisted out the boats, that I scarcely hoped to launch them in safety; and, indeed, only the steady and orderly conduct of the crew could have enabled us to accomplish so difficult and hazardous an undertaking. It is due to them to observe, that not a man in the ship attempted to make use of the liquor which every one had in his power. While the cutter was getting out, I perceived one of the seamen, John Tipper, emptying a demijohn, or bottle, containing five gallons, which, on inquiry, I found to be rum. He said he was emptying it for the purpose of refilling it with water from the scuttle-cask on the quarter-deck, which contained the only fresh water to be got at. Afterwards, this became our principal supply. I relate this circumstance as being so highly creditable to the character of a British sailor.

We had scarcely quitted the ship, when she suddenly gave a heavy lurch to port, and then went down head foremost. I had ordered the colours to be hoisted at the main-top-gallant mast-head, with the Union flag downwards, as a signal of distress, so that, if any vessel should happen to be near us at

the dawn of day, she might perceive our unfortunate situation, and come to our relief.

At the moment the ship sunk, one of our crew exclaimed, "There, my brave fellows,—there goes the pride of Old England!"

Having at length surmounted dangers and difficulties which baffle all description, we rigged the fore-mast, and prepared to shape our course in the best manner that circumstances would admit of, the wind blowing from the precise point on which it was necessary to sail to reach the nearest land. An hour had scarcely elapsed from the time the ship struck until she foundered. The distribution of the crew had already been made in the following order, which we afterwards preserved:—

In the cutter, which measured twenty feet in length, six feet four inches in breadth, and two feet six inches in depth, were embarked three ladies and myself, Captain Richard Thomas, of the Royal Navy, the French commander of the schooner which we had captured two days before, the master's mate, gunner, steward, carpenter, and eight seamen; in all, eighteen people: a burden which, together with the provisions, brought the boat's gunwale down to six or seven inches only from the water.

In the jolly-boat, which measured fourteen feet from stem to stern, five feet three inches in breadth, and two feet in depth, were embarked Mr. Samuel Bargus, master, Lieutenant George Cooke, of the 1st regiment of Guards, the boatswain, sailmaker, and seven seamen; in all, eleven persons.

The provisions we were enabled to save consisted of—biscuit, between forty and fifty pounds; water, a demijohn of five gallons, and a small jug of the same; spruce beer, part of a small barrel; port wine, a few bottles. We had also a quadrant on board, two compasses, a spy-glass, a small tin

mug, a wine glass; and, fortunately, the deck-lantern, with a few spare candles, and a tinder-box and some matches which the cook had had the foresight to secure.

The wind was now blowing strong from the westward, with a heavy sea running, and the day had just dawned. We calculated that we were at a distance of 350 miles from St. John's in Newfoundland, with the prospect of a continuance of westerly winds; and that in our use of our small stock of provisions, it was indispensable to adopt the most rigid economy. I represented to my companions in distress, that our resolution, once made, should on no account be changed; and that we must accustom ourselves to privations, which, I foresaw, would be greater than I ventured to explain. To each person, therefore, were served out half a biscuit and a glass of wine, as their allowance for the ensuing twenty-four hours; all agreeing to leave the water untouched as long as possible. During the time we were employed in hoisting out the boats, I had ordered the master to throw the main-hatch tarpauling into the cutter; which, being cut into lengths, enabled us to form a temporary bulwark against the waves. I had also reminded the carpenter to carry with him as many tools as he could; accordingly, he had put, among other things, a few nails into his pockets, and we repaired the gunwale of the cutter, which, in hoisting her out, had been stove in. Soon after daylight we made sail, with the jolly-boat in tow, and stood close-hauled to the northward and westward, in the hope of reaching the coast of Newfoundland, or of being picked up by some vessel. We passed a couple of icebergs, nearly as large as the one which had destroyed the *Lady Hobart*. We now said prayers, and returned thanks to God for our deliverance. At noon we calculated our position, and found that we were in lat. $46^{\circ} 33' N.$, St. John's bearing about W. three-quarters N., distant 350 miles.

It was not until the 4th of July, after encountering various gales of wind, and being reduced by famine to almost the lowest possible state of existence, that they reached Conception Bay, on the coast of Newfoundland.

I wish, says Captain Fellowes, it were possible for me to describe our sensations at this interesting moment. From the constant watching and fatigue, and from the langour and depression induced by our physical exhaustion, we had been brought into such a condition of irritability that the joy of a speedy relief affected us all in a most remarkable manner. Many burst into tears; some looked at each other with a stupid stare, as if doubtful of the reality of what they saw; several were in such a lethargic condition, that no consolation, no animating language, could rouse them to exertion.

At this affecting period, though overpowered by my own feelings, and impressed with the recollection of our sufferings, and the sight of so many deplorable objects, I proposed to offer up our solemn thanks to Heaven for our miraculous deliverance. Every one cheerfully assented; and as soon as I opened the prayer-book (which I had secured the last time I went down to my cabin) all were silent: a spirit of devotion was so singularly manifested on this occasion, that to the benefits of a religious sense in uncultivated minds must be ascribed that discipline, good order, and exertion, which even the sight of land could scarcely produce.

Captain Fellowes, with the whole of his crew and passengers, reached land, excepting the unfortunate French prisoner, who, in a state of wild delirium, threw himself overboard on Sunday the 3rd, the day before the castaways were delivered from the perils of the sea.

XIII.

LOSS OF THE "ST. GEORGE" AND THE "DEFENCE."

December 1811.



ON the 12th of November 1811, the *St. George*, a noble three-decker of ninety-eight guns, carrying the flag of Rear-Admiral Reynolds, sailed from Hano in charge of a large convoy of merchant vessels, "homeward bound." On the 15th, she and her convoy arrived off the island of Zealand, after a very stormy passage, in which several traders had unfortunately foundered. The rear-admiral was induced, by these painful occurrences, to drop anchor, with the intention of waiting for a more favourable wind; but during the night a perfect hurricane arose, and all hands were piped on deck to ease out the ship's cable. While they were thus engaged, a large merchant vessel, which no longer obeyed her helm, but was drifting hither and thither at the mercy of the waves, came into violent collision with the *St. George*: her hull struck the bows of the man-of-war, and carried away its cables; but the shock proved fatal to the smaller ship, which sank immediately, with every soul on board.

Such an incident was well calculated to depress the energies of the crew of the *St. George*, but their own danger was

too great for them to give it more than a passing thought. They had dropped anchor in twenty fathoms; on taking soundings, they found they were only in fourteen. As the ship was evidently drifting in towards the shore, Captain Guion, who commanded under Rear-Admiral Reynolds, ordered the best bower-anchor to be let go; but the furious force of the waves snapped off its massive ring, as a strong man snaps in twain a piece of straw. An effort was then made to keep the ship out to sea; but before the necessary canvas could be set, the gale caught hold of it as of a plaything, and blew it clean from the yards. As they were now in only eight fathoms, they were ordered to let go the sheet-anchor; but it did not stay the ship, and, unable to endure the strain upon it, broke short off like a reed. The captain then gave orders for the masts to be cut away. Axes were plied with right good will, and the "tall poles" soon went "by the board." Almost at the same moment, a tremendous sea took up the ship, as a mother takes her child in her arms, and then let her fall on a sand-bank, where she remained securely fixed.

It was not supposed that any further efforts could save the vessel, but her crew were ordered to man the pumps; an order which they obeyed with characteristic readiness. The night wore away, and as the gray dawn glimmered in the cloudy sky, some gleam of hope entered every breast; for day seems always to bring with it consolation and strength for the human heart. And, moreover, it was found that the water did not gain on the ship. Cold, and weary, and spent, with sleet and snow falling in heavy showers, the men still continued their laborious task; and when the light of a November morning enabled them to recognize their exact position, they found that the vessel was stranded at about four miles from the shore.

Gradually the wind went down, and the fury of the waters subsided, but the *St. George* remained on the sand-bank all day and until twelve o'clock on the night following. The sea had then sunk several feet: the ship's head swung round to the land; she cleared the shoal, and was once more in deep water; jury-masts were fitted up; a new rudder was obtained from the *Creçy*, one of the squadron under Rear-Admiral Reynold's command; she continued her voyage; and, with the squadron and convoy, arrived in safety at Gotenburg on the 2nd of December.

She remained at this port until the 17th, when, having partially made good her damages, she again sailed, accompanied by the *Defence* and the *Creçy*, to convoy a homeward-bound fleet of merchantmen.

But what seemed an evil destiny pursued her. On the 23rd, when off the coast of Jutland, she encountered another heavy gale from the north-west, which so buffeted her about, that when, at midnight, she was ordered to wear, it was found she could not answer her helm. In order to bring her head round to the wind, an anchor was let go; but the cable, catching under her keel, carried away the rudder borrowed from the *Creçy*, and in doing so snapped asunder. The ship immediately "fell off," as sailors say—that is, she yielded to the wind—and, to lighten her, Captain Guion struck the lower yards and topmasts. In this defenceless condition she became the plaything of the storm, which quickly carried her towards the land. Between five and six in the morning, a gun being heard from the *Defence*, the crew of the *St. George* concluded that she had gone ashore, and shortly afterwards their own vessel struck.

On examining the well, the carpenter reported the depth of water in the hold at ten feet; but it rose so rapidly that in less than half an hour it gained the lower deck, driving

the people to the upper deck. There was at first some not unnatural alarm and confusion; but Admiral Reynolds and Captain Guion, by their example and encouragement, soon restored discipline, and kept the men steady at their posts. At ten o'clock, the sea poured in such floods over the main-deck, that all hands were compelled to seek refuge on the poop. Meantime, the boats, with the exception of the yawl, had either been stove in or washed overboard. It is recorded, as an example of the manly obedience to orders of the crew of the *St. George*, that three or four men having asked permission to attempt to reach the shore in the yawl, and having received it, were ordered back to their posts when it appeared impossible that the boat could live in so heavy a sea, and without a murmur they obeyed. It is worth notice that two of these men were among the few who were saved.

We feel no pleasure in minutely detailing the sufferings undergone by the crew of the ill-fated *St. George*. Many perished through the intensity of the cold to which they were subjected; many were swept overboard by the rush of the waves; not a few were killed by falling spars or crashing timbers. At eight o'clock in the evening of the 24th, fourteen men took to the boat, and made a desperate effort to escape from the wreck; but the billows soon capsized them, and all perished. Orders having been given to cut away the mizzen-mast, the men, unable to find their axes, began to hack the lanyards of the rigging with their knives: at this very moment, a tremendous wave carried away the mast, the poop, and all who were assembled upon it,—both the living and the dead. The former set to work to pile up the bodies of the latter in rows one above another, so as to form a kind of breakwater; and in the fourth of these rows lay the gallant admiral and the not less gallant captain, their distinguished career thus untimeously brought to an end.

It is supposed that nearly two hundred men were alive at this conjuncture. They employed themselves, as a last resource, in constructing a raft, on which a few adventurers might carry a rope ashore. A topsail yard and a cross-jack yard having been lashed together, ten men embarked on the crazy structure; but the waves soon rent asunder the hastily secured spars, and swept five men away: the others gained the shore, but one of them almost immediately died of exhaustion. Three of the crew had previously been carried off the poop at the moment of its separation from the hull of the ship, and, strange to say, had been safely washed ashore. So that out of a complement of seven hundred and fifty officers and men, only *seven* escaped with their lives. These poor fellows were in a sad condition, but received from the Danes the most generous and kindly assistance.

Let us now direct our attention to the two consorts of the *St. George*—namely, the *Creçy* and the *Defence*. The commander of the former, Captain Pater, seeing that it was impossible to give any assistance to the flag-ship, and that if he continued on the starboard tack his own vessel would be destroyed, prudently wore round, stood to the southward, and carried the *Creçy* out of danger.

The master of the *Defence* would fain have had his commander, Captain Atkins, follow this wise example; but the captain, hearing that the admiral had not made the signal to part company, replied, with what seems to us an unreasonable excess of chivalry, “I will never abandon my admiral in the hour of danger and distress.” The result was the loss to the British navy of a noble man-of-war, and of nearly six hundred experienced officers and seamen.

About six A.M. all hands were ordered on deck to wear ship; but before this manœuvre could be accomplished, the

sea broke over her and swept away several men. Minute-guns were then fired, but after a few discharges they broke adrift; while the waves worked their will with the ship, shattering its timbers, and washing overboard its spars, and finally hurling it ashore with a terrific crash. In a few moments all was over. Out of a crew of six hundred men only six escaped. One of these has left on record an account of the manner in which his life was saved. Its interest justifies its quotation:—

After the ship went to pieces, I got on one side of the booms that were floating among the rest of the wreck. At that time every man except two, John Platt and Ralph Jeasel—two of the men who were saved—were washed off. Myself and several more were at the same time swept off the mizzen-top. I then made the best of my way from one spar to another, until I got on one side of the booms. At this time about forty men regained their position upon the booms. when another sea washed all off except four. I got on the booms a second time, and spoke to John Brown, and told him I thought we were approaching the shore. There were then about twenty men on them, but when we reached the shore there were only six left.

Two Danes on the beach came to our assistance. My foot got jammed in amongst the small spars, and my comrades, seeing that I was unable to get off the raft, were coming to my help, when the Danes made signs to them to be quiet. One Dane made three attempts before he succeeded in reaching the raft, and the third time he was nearly exhausted: he managed to get hold of my foot, and wrenched it out, and carried me on shore. I was then taken up to a shed to wait for some carts which were coming for us, most of us being unable to walk. In about ten minutes a number of gentlemen arrived on horseback, and some carts came down upon

the beach. We were then placed in them and driven to a small village called *Shelton*. On the road the man who drove the cart spoke to a woman, and asked her if she had any liquor. She replied by drawing a bottle from her pocket, and made each of us take a dram, which I believe was in a great measure the saving of our lives.

We soon arrived at the houses in the village, where we were stripped and put to bed, and treated by the inhabitants with the greatest hospitality and kindness. When I awoke, I found another seaman had been placed in the same bed with me. He had come on shore some time after myself upon a broken spar. He said, just as he reached the strand the poop and forecastle were capsized, and no living persons were to be seen, except a few upon pieces of wreck. In the evening, a gentleman, who spoke English, came to our bedside, and told us that an officer had been brought up to the house. He also told us that there was another ship on shore to the southward of us, which appeared to be a three-decker, lying with her stern on shore. We knew directly it could be no other than the *St. George*.

He inquired if we were able to get up and go and look at the body of the officer, and see if we knew him. We answered Yes, and, with the assistance of the people, went into the barn and recognized our captain. We then returned to bed again, being too exhausted to stand. The gentleman told us that medical assistance could not be procured that night, but that we should have every nourishment the house could afford. He then took his leave, promising that he would return in the morning, when we might be better able to speak to him.

He accordingly came in the morning, and inquired what force our ship was.

We told him a seventy-four-gun ship, with a company of

six hundred men. Upon our inquiring if any more of our shipmates had reached the shore, he answered No; and we returned most hearty thanks to the Almighty for our deliverance.

On Sunday, the 29th, we put our captain into a coffin, and buried him in Shelton churchyard, with two men alongside of him.

It was some time, through the bitterness of the cold and the bruises we had received, before we were able to walk about. As soon as we had gained sufficient strength, we went down to the beach, where we saw, scattered for about two miles along the shore, the wreck of the *Defence*; but not a corpse was to be seen. We supposed they had drifted away to the southward and westward, a strong current setting that way. This opinion was in a great measure confirmed by seeing our officers' things sold, and other articles belonging to the ship, six miles to the southward of where we were cast away, when we went to join the few who were saved from the *St. George*. On the 13th of January, the body of our captain was taken up again, and carried to Renkinn Church, and interred in a vault with the honours of war.

The crew of the *Defence*, at the time this catastrophe occurred, amounted to 593 men, all told; that of the *St. George* to 738: in all, 1331. Only thirteen were saved.

XIV.

LOSS OF THE "ATALANTE."

November 1813.



THE wreck of the *Atalante* is a very striking example of the admirable discipline of British seamen in hours of the most critical disaster. Any sudden emergency or unforeseen danger has a tendency to burst our bonds of self-control, and to deprive us of our usual presence of mind ; and having thus lost our balance, we are apt to grow indifferent to the constraints of order and rule which generally guide us. But the strict discipline—strict, yet not rigid—which has invariably been maintained in the Royal Navy, and the Englishman's innate sense of duty, have almost always proved sufficient, even under the most pressing circumstances, to guard against these evils.

The loss of the *Atalante* has been described by Captain Basil Hall, with his customary vigour and ease of style, and in the following narrative we shall freely avail ourselves of his language.

His Majesty's frigate *Atalante*, commanded by Captain Frederick Hickey, stood in for Halifax Harbour, Nova Scotia, on the morning of the 10th of November 1813. As the weather was very thick, she carefully felt her way with the lead ; and look-out men were stationed at the jib-boom end,

fore-yard-arms, and everywhere else from which a glimpse of the land was likely to be obtained. After breakfast, a fog-signal gun was fired, under the supposition that it would be answered by the lighthouse on Cape Sambro.* And, within a few minutes, a gun was heard in the north-north-west quarter, exactly where the light, according to their calculations, should be. As the soundings corresponded with the estimated position of the ship, and as the guns of the *Atalante*, fired at intervals of fifteen minutes, were regularly answered in the direction of the harbour's mouth, Captain Hickey determined to stand on, entering the port under the guidance of these sounds alone. By an unhappy coincidence, however, these answering guns were fired, not from the lighthouse on Cape Sambro, but from His Majesty's ship *Barrossa*, which was likewise involved in the fog. Her commander, too, supposed that he was communicating with the lighthouse, when, in reality, he was replying to the guns of the *Atalante*.

There was certainly, says Captain Hall, no inconsiderable risk incurred by running in for the harbour's mouth under such circumstances, even if the guns had been fired by the lighthouse. But it will often happen that it becomes an officer's duty to put his ship, as well as his life, in hazard; and the present appears to have been exactly one of these cases. Captain Hickey was charged with urgent despatches relative to the enemy's fleet, which it was of the greatest importance to deliver without an hour's delay. But there was every appearance of this fog lasting for a whole week; and as he and his officers had passed over the ground a hundred times before, and were as well acquainted with every bearing as any pilot could be, he resolved to try the bold experiment;

* At many lighthouses a gun is kept in readiness to fire signals during the prevalence of fog.

and the *Atalante* was accordingly steered in the supposed direction of Halifax.

They had sailed, however, but a very short distance when one of the look-out men exclaimed, in words that always fall heavily on a sailor's ears, "Breakers ahead ! Hard a-star-board !" The warning came too late, and before the helm could be shifted the *Atalante* was tossed upon the formidable reefs known as the *Sister Rocks*, which form the eastern ledge of Sambro Island. At the first blow, the rudder and half of the stern-post, together with a great part of the false keel, were driven off, and floated up alongside. There is reason to believe, indeed, that a portion of the bottom of the ship, loaded with one hundred and twenty tons of iron ballast, was torn from the upper works by this terrible shock, and that the ship, which instantly filled with water, was afterwards buoyed up entirely by the empty casks, until the deck and sides were burst through or rent asunder by the waves.

The captain, who throughout the whole scene preserved as much composure as if nothing remarkable had taken place, now ordered the guns to be thrown overboard ; but before one of them could be cast loose, or a rope cut, the ship fell over at such an angle that the men could not stand. It was not without difficulty that some guns were fired as signals of distress. Captain Hickey then ordered the yard-tackles to be hooked, so that the pinnace might be hoisted out ; but as the masts, deprived of their holdfasts in the bottom of the ship, could barely stand, but reeled from side to side, the people were called down again.

With considerable exertions, however, the men succeeded in lowering the quarter-boats ; but the jolly-boat, which happened to be on the poop undergoing repairs, struck against one of the stern davits as she was being launched, and sank. As the ship was now falling fast over on her beam-ends, the

captain gave directions to cut away the fore and main masts. They fortunately fell without injuring the large boat on the booms ; but, at the same moment, the ship parted in two, between the main and mizzen masts, and the unfortunate *Atalante* became a mere wreck, breaking up into small fragments at each swell of the tide.

By this time a considerable number of men had clambered into the pinnacle on the booms, in hopes she might float off as the ship went down ; but Captain Hickey, observing that a boat so loaded could never swim, desired some twenty of the men to quit her ; and it is worthy of notice that his orders, calmly given, were promptly obeyed.

Throughout the whole course of these painful circumstances, the discipline of the ship appears to have been maintained, not only without the slightest sign of insubordination, but with a truly remarkable degree of cheerful willingness. Even when the masts fell, the crash of the shivered spars was drowned in the loud huzzas of the undaunted crew, though they were clinging to the weather gunwale, with the sea ever and anon pouring over them, and but little apparent hope of their safety.

No sooner was the pinnacle relieved from the pressure of the crowd than she floated off the booms, or rather was knocked off by a sea which turned her bottom upwards, and wheeled her into the surf amidst the fragments of the wreck. The seamen, however, imitating the gallant composure of their captain, and keeping their eyes fixed upon him, never for a moment lost their self possession. By dint of great exertions, they succeeded not only in righting the boat, but in extricating her from the confused heap of spars, and the dash of the breakers, so as to get her clear at a little distance from the wreck. Then they waited for further orders from their captain, who, with about forty men, still clung to the shattered timbers of the *Atalante*.

An attempt was now made to construct a raft, as it was feared the three boats could not possibly carry all hands ; but this was prevented by the violence of the waves, and it was resolved to trust to the boats alone, though they were already, to all appearance, quite full. As the wreck was fast disappearing, there was no time for further consideration ; and in order to pack close, most of the men were removed to the pinnace, where they were stowed away flat at the bottom "like herrings in a barrel," while the small boats returned to carry off the rest. "This proved no easy matter in any case, while in others it was found impossible ; so that many of the men had to swim for it, others were dragged through the waves by ropes, and some were forked off by oars and small spars."

There was a merry fellow among the crew—the Momus of the *Atalante*—a black fiddler, who, at this critical juncture, was found clinging to the main-chains with his beloved violin squeezed closely, but delicately, under his arm, an absurd picture of distress, and even at this moment a subject of laughter to the men. The violinist soon found that he must either lose his fiddle or his life ; and much as he loved the former, he loved the latter better, so that he abandoned his instrument to the mercy of the waves.

The poor negro musician's tenacity of purpose, says Captain Hall, arose from sheer love of his art ; but there was another laugh raised about the same time at the expense of the captain's clerk, who, stimulated purely by a sense of duty, lost all recollection of himself in his anxiety to save what was committed to his charge, and thus was nearly going, burden and all, to the bottom. This zealous person had general orders that, whenever guns were fired, or whenever any other circumstance occurred likely to shake the chronometer, he was to hold it in his hand, so that its works might not be de-

ranged by the concussion. So soon, therefore, as the poor ship dashed against the rocks, the clerk's thoughts naturally turned exclusively on the timepiece. He caught up the precious watch, and ran on deck ; but, being no swimmer, was obliged to cling to the mizzen-top, where he seated himself in much alarm, "grinning like a monkey who has run off with a cocoa-nut," till the spar gave way, and he was plunged, chronometer and all, right overboard. "Every eye was now turned to the spot to see whether this most public-spirited of scribes was ever to appear again, when, to the great joy of all, he emerged from the waves, watch still in hand ! but it was not without great difficulty that he was dragged into the boat, half-drowned."

With the exception of this chronometer and the admiral's despatches, which the captain had taken care to secure when the *Atalante* first struck, everything on board was lost.

The pinnace now contained seventy-nine men and one woman ; the cutter, forty-two ; the gig, eighteen. Thus loaded, it was with difficulty they kept their gunwales above water. Captain Hickey was the last man to quit the wreck ; though, so great were the respect and attachment felt for him by the crew, that those who had remained with him on the last plank of the ship were most reluctant to leave their commander, even for a moment, in so perilous a position. So rapidly indeed had the work of destruction taken place, that by the time Captain Hickey reached the boat the wreck had almost entirely disappeared. As she settled down the crew gave three hearty huzzas, and then abandoned for ever the scattered fragments of what had been their home for nearly seven years.

The fog continued as dense as ever ; and both the binnacles having been washed overboard, no compass could be procured.



SINKING OF THE "ATALANTE."

The wind was very light, and it was no easy matter to steer in a straight line. Had there been a breeze, it would, perhaps, have been easier to shape a course. In this dilemma they hit upon a resource which, for a time, proved tolerably useful. Before leaving the wreck they had some idea of the direction in which the land lay, and the three boats were therefore laid in a row pointing in that direction. The sternmost boat then quitted her station in the rear, and pulled ahead until she came in a line with the other two boats, taking care not to push so far forward as to be lost in the fog; the boat which by this movement became the last astern

then rowed ahead as the first had done ; and so they continued, doubling along one after the other. The following little diagram will make our description clear :—



This mode of proceeding was necessarily very tardy, and, after all, it was only temporarily successful, for at length they found themselves completely unable to discover which way to steer. Just at this critical moment an old quartermaster, named Samuel Shanks, remembered that at the end of his watch-chain hung a small compass-seal. This discovery was announced to the other boats by a joyous shout from the pinnace; and the compass being quickly handed into the gig to the captain, it was placed on the top of the chronometer so nobly rescued by the clerk. As this instrument worked on “jimbles,” the little needle upon it kept sufficiently steady for steering the boat within a few points.

They were now able to steer directly in-shore, and shortly afterwards fell in with an old fisherman, who piloted them to a bight called Portuguese Cove, where they all landed in safety, at a distance of twenty miles from the town of Halifax.

Great fires were kindled by the fishermen to warm their shivering guests, most of whom, being very lightly clad, and all, of course, dripping wet, were in a very sorry predicament ; many of them also, says Captain Hall, were miserably cramped by close packing in the boats.

Not a few--and especially was this the case with those

who had last quitted the ship—having been compelled to swim for their lives, had flung off all but their trousers. And it is recorded that the only respectably-dressed person out of the whole party was Quartermaster Samuel Shanks, the owner of the watch and compass-seal,—“a steady, hard-a-weather sailor,” who took the various circumstances of the case as coolly as if a shipwreck were rather pleasant than otherwise, and, for all *he* cared, might occur daily ! He did not even remove his hat ; except, indeed, to give his good vessel a farewell cheer as she went to the bottom !

The captain now decided upon his next movements. He carried the three boats round to the harbour, taking with him the men who had endured the severest fatigue, and those who were most poorly clothed. The others, headed by their officers, marched straight across the country to Halifax, in three divisions, keeping together in as close an array as if they had been proceeding upon some well-understood piece of service. Very few of the party could boast of shoes ; a deficiency which was very severely felt, owing to the wooded character of the country they traversed. And yet, despite all this, there was not a single straggler ; and the entire ship's company, officers, men, and boys, assembled in the evening at Halifax in as exact an array as if the *Atalante* had never met with a mishap.

Such is the story of the *Atalante* ; and I think it is one which may be read with profit by all who reverence the great law of duty. I propose to conclude with Captain Basil Hall's excellent remarks.

“ It is,” he says, “rather an unusual combination of disasters for a ship to be so totally wrecked as to be actually obliterated from the face of the waters in the course of an hour, in fine weather, in the daytime, on well-known rocks,

and close to a lighthouse, but without the loss of a single man, or the smallest accident to any one person on board.

“In the next place, it is highly important to observe that the lives of the crew, in all probability, would not, and perhaps could not, have been saved, had the discipline been, in the smallest degree, less exactly maintained. Had any impatience been manifested by the people to run into the boats, or had the captain not possessed sufficient authority to reduce the numbers which had crowded into the pinnace when she was still resting on the booms, at least half of the crew must have lost their lives.

“It was chiefly, therefore, if not entirely, to the personal influence which Captain Hickey possessed over the minds of all on board, that their safety was owing. Their habitual confidence in his fortitude, talents, and professional knowledge had from long experience become so great, that every man in the ship, in this extremity of danger, instinctively turned to him for assistance; and seeing him so cheerful, and so completely master of himself, they relinquished to his well-known and often-tried sagacity the formidable task of extricating them from the impending peril. It is at such moments as these, indeed, that the grand distinction between man and man is developed, and the full ascendancy of a powerful and well-regulated mind makes itself felt.”

XV.

LOSS OF THE "MEDUSA."

July 1816.



THE wreck of the French frigate *Medusa*, on her voyage to Senegal, is one of the most appalling chapters in the chronicles of the sea. The circumstances under which the vessel was lost have been so frequently described that we shall not narrate them here, but confine ourselves to the terrible sufferings of her crew and passengers after they were compelled to abandon the doomed frigate. As she had been employed in carrying out the French governor of Senegal to his seat of government, she had a number of soldiers and officers on board besides her crew, and it was impossible to accommodate them in the *Medusa's* boats. A large raft was therefore hastily constructed of the ship's masts and yards.

Our narrative of what followed is borrowed from a very graphic account in the *Journal des Débats*, September 1816.

On the 5th of July 1816, the embarkation of the crew and of the soldiers, who had bidden defiance to all the restraints of discipline, took place, in the boats and on the raft, without any attempt at order or regularity. There ought to have

been sixty seamen on the raft, and not more than ten were placed there. But to this frail machine no fewer than one hundred and forty-seven landmen, soldiers and officers, were intrusted. The haste with which it was built prevented it from being fitted up with any kind of bulwark ; because, probably, those who ordered its construction had no intention of committing themselves to it. Its length was about sixty



CONSTRUCTION OF THE RAFT.

feet. If solidly put together, it might have carried two hundred men ; but of its weakness abundant evidence was too quickly furnished. It had neither sails nor masts, though a short spar or jury-mast was rigged up afterwards ; and the stock of provisions which formed its cargo consisted of a number of quart-measures of flour, five barrels of wine, and two casks of water.

Scarcely had fifty men set foot upon this raft than it sank

at least two feet. To facilitate the embarkation of other soldiers on the raft, they were compelled to throw all the flour into the sea—the wine and water were alone preserved ; and the embarkation continued until one hundred and forty-seven were crowded upon it. The raft by this time had sunk three feet ; and so closely were its passengers huddled together that it was impossible to move a single step, and the water was up to their middle. At the moment they left the frigate, about twenty pounds of biscuit were flung to them ; but falling into the sea, it was recovered with difficulty, and reduced almost to a paste. Even in this state, however, it was valuable.

It had been given out that the raft was to be towed by all the boats of the frigate, and the officers in command had sworn they would never abandon it. How far they fulfilled their pledge the reader will soon learn.

The boat in which the governor sat flung to them the first towing-rope. Shouts of "*Vive le Roi !*" were again and again repeated by the people on the raft, and a small white flag—the flag of the Bourbons—was hoisted at the extremity of a musket-barrel. The officer placed in charge of the raft was a midshipman of the first class, named Coudin.

We now quote the words of one of the survivors :—

If all the efforts of the boats had constantly acted upon us, favoured as we were by the sea-breeze, we should have reached land in less than three days, for the frigate was not wrecked more than twelve or fifteen leagues from the shore : such were the calculations of the officers, and they proved to be correct, because, on the very day of departure, the boats sighted land before sunset. The first lieutenant of the frigate, after having towed us *alone* for some minutes, perceived that his unaided exertions were useless. So he cut the cable

which held us, and left us to our fate. Several persons declared to me that, after this operation, they heard the barbarous cry of "Let us abandon them!" This fact I gathered from several persons; though I would rather be inclined to believe that humanity and honour inspired very different sentiments in the hearts of those who had solemnly vowed to assist us.

In truth, we refused to be convinced that we were entirely abandoned, until the boats were almost out of sight. Our consternation was then extreme. All the horrors of famine and thirst were conjured up by our excited imaginations; and we had also to struggle with a treacherous element, which already covered our bodies to the waist. All the seamen and soldiers yielded to despair, and it was only after prolonged efforts that we succeeded in calming their fears.

We had embarked without taking any nourishment, and we now began to feel the pangs of hunger. A little biscuit, soaked in a small quantity of wine, made up our first repast; and it was the best we enjoyed while we remained on the raft. Some order was established in the distribution of our wretched pittance; but by the end of the first day, which passed in tolerable tranquillity, the biscuit was completely exhausted. In the night, our hearts and our prayers, by a sentiment natural to the unfortunate, turned towards Heaven. We invoked its protection with fervour, and derived from our prayers the advantage of hoping for deliverance.

We still cherished the delusion that the boats would speedily return to our assistance. Night came, however, without any fulfilment of our hopes; the wind freshened; the swell of the sea was considerable: what a terrible night!

During the hours of darkness, a great number of our passengers who had not "seamen's legs" fell over one another; and most cruel were the sufferings of all until day

arrived. Then what a spectacle presented itself to our view ! Ten or twelve unfortunate creatures, with their limbs entangled in the interstices left between the timbers of the raft, had been unable to disengage themselves, and had lost their lives. Several others had been carried off the raft by the violence of the sea ; so that by morning we were already twenty fewer in number.

We deplored the loss of our unfortunate companions ; but did not, at this moment, anticipate the scene that was to take place next night. The hopes of seeing the boats again in the course of the day supported our courage ; but when these were disappointed, an extreme depression followed, and from that moment a seditious spirit manifested itself by cries of fury.

Night came on : thick clouds curtained the sky ; the sea raged more terribly than on the preceding night ; and the men, unable to hold fast to the raft, either fore or aft, crowded towards the steadiest part, the centre. Those unable to reach it perished almost to a man ; and such were the hurry and press of the people in their wild endeavours to save themselves, that not a few were suffocated by the weight of their comrades, who fell upon them every moment.

The soldiers and sailors, giving themselves up for lost, fell to drinking, and drank to such an excess that they lost their reason. In this state their deliriousness reached such an extreme, that they conceived the intention of murdering their officers, and destroying the raft by cutting the ropes which united its different parts. One of them, armed with a hatchet, advanced to carry out this ferocious design, and had already begun to sever the fastenings, which was the signal of revolt. The officers rushed forward to restrain the madman and his companions, and he fell dead beneath the well-delivered stroke of a sabre. Many of the passengers joined

us in our effort to preserve our only means of safety. The mutineers drew their swords, and those who had none armed themselves with knives. We assumed a defensive position, and the struggle began. One of the rebels raised his weapon against an officer; he fell immediately, stricken with many wounds. This firmness appeared for a moment to intimidate his comrades; but closing in their ranks, they withdrew a little to meditate their plans. A sailor, feigning to repose himself, had begun to cut the ropes with a knife, when, being informed of his act by a domestic, we rushed upon him; a soldier, attempting to defend him, threatened one of us with his knife, and aiming a blow at him, struck only his coat. The officer, sharply turning round, knocked down his antagonist, and threw both him and his comrade into the sea.

The conflict soon became general. The mast broke, and falling upon Captain Dupont, who still remained insensible, broke his thigh. He was seized by the soldiers, who flung him into the seething waters. We perceived this, however, in time to save him. We then placed him in a barrel; but he was torn from it by the mutineers, who wished to dig out his eyes with a knife. Roused by such ferocity, we charged them with unexampled ardour, dashing through the lines which the soldiers had formed, sabre in hand; and many of them paid with their lives the penalty of their madness. We were well seconded by the passengers. After a second charge, the violence of the rebels gave place to as signal a cowardice; most of them threw themselves on their knees and asked pardon, which was immediately granted.

Thinking that order was now restored, we returned to our post in the centre of the raft. It was nearly midnight. We kept our arms. It was well we did so, for after an hour of apparent tranquillity the revolt broke out afresh. The soldiers were quite mad; but as their physical strength was not dimin-

ished, and as they were provided with weapons, it became necessary again that we should act upon the defensive. They attacked us; we charged them in turn; and soon the raft was strewn with the dead and dying. Those of our adversaries who were unarmed endeavoured to rend us to pieces with their teeth. Many of us were cruelly bitten; I myself had severe wounds on the legs and shoulder. There were not more than twelve or fifteen of us to resist these desperate wretches; but our union, and our coolness, gave us strength.

At length the morning broke upon this scene of horror. A great number of the madmen had flung themselves headlong into the sea; and on a careful examination we found that during these terrible hours of darkness sixty-five of our antagonists had perished. We had lost only two of our party, and not a single officer.

But the light of dawn revealed to us a new misfortune. The rebels, during the tumult, had thrown into the sea two barrels of wine, and, still worse, the only two casks of water which were upon the raft. There remained but *one* cask of wine, and we were still sixty-seven men in all. We were compelled to put ourselves upon half rations. This was a new subject of complaint, when the distribution commenced. Matters came to such a pitch, that we were constrained to resort to an extreme measure for the maintenance of our wretched lives. I shudder with horror while I retrace that which we put in practice. My pen drops from my hand. A mortal coldness freezes all my limbs, and my hair stands on end. Father of heaven! dare we still raise towards Thee our hands dyed with the blood of our fellow-men? Thy clemency is infinite, and thy paternal goodness has already granted to our repentance the pardon of a crime which was never voluntary, but forced upon us by the most awful necessity!



THE FIGHT ON THE RAFT

Those who had survived the terrible night I have endeavoured to describe, flung themselves ravenously on the dead bodies with which the raft was covered, and cut them up in slices, which some, even in that very instant, greedily devoured. At first, a great number of us refused to touch the horrible food; but after a while, yielding to a want more powerful than the ordinary sentiments of humanity, we saw in this frightful repast the only, though most deplorable, means of prolonging our existence; and I proposed, I acknowledge it, to dry those bleeding limbs, so as to render them a little more supportable to the taste. Some, however, still retained courage enough to refuse the horrible food, and these received a somewhat larger ration of wine.

The following day passed without any relief. Night came, and we shared a brief interval of repose, interrupted by the most cruel dreams. Then, for the fourth time, the sun shone upon our woes, and showed us ten or twelve of our companions stretched lifeless on the raft. We reserved one of their bodies for our sustenance, and committed the others to the deep.

About four o'clock in the afternoon a happy incident brought us some consolation. A shoal of flying-fish got under our raft; and as an infinite number of open spaces yawned between the planks, scores of them got entangled. We pounced upon them, and effected a considerable capture, taking about three hundred. Our first movement was to thank God for this unexpected provision. By means of some dried gunpowder, a flint and steel, tinder and a few rags, we kindled a fire, on which we broiled the fish, eating them with an indescribable relish. But to this wholesome fare we added a portion of that sacrilegious flesh, which roasting rendered endurable, and which the officers and myself now touched for the first time. The night was fine, and we should have esteemed

it fortunate, but for the occurrence of a new massacre. Some Spaniards, Italians, and negroes, who had remained neutral in the first revolt, or had joined our side, conspired to throw us all into the sea.

Thus we were compelled to resume our arms. The difficulty was, to ascertain who were the really guilty. They were pointed out to us by some faithful seamen. The signal of combat was given by a Spaniard, who, placing himself behind the mast, and clasping it closely, made the sign of the cross, and invoked the name of God, brandishing at the same time a long cutlass. The seamen seized and threw him into the sea. The mutineers hastened to avenge their comrade; they were repulsed, and tranquillity once more prevailed.

The sixth day dawned upon us. At the hour of repast I counted our company: we were only thirty, having lost five of our faithful seamen.

The survivors were in the most deplorable condition. The salt water had taken the skin completely off our lower limbs; and as we were covered with wounds and bruises, it kept us in a state of incessant irritation. Not more than twenty of us were able to keep on our legs, and walk about. Nearly all our wine and store of fish were exhausted; of the latter we had about a dozen, and of the former a sufficient quantity for four days' consumption. In four days, we said, all will be spent, and death will be inevitable. Seven days had passed since we were abandoned. We calculated that if the boats were not swamped on the coast, they would occupy at least three to four days in reaching St. Louis; some time would then be necessary to despatch vessels in search of us, and these would require some time to reach us. We resolved to hold out as long as possible. In the course of the day two soldiers crept behind the only cask of wine which was left; they pierced it, and drank from it with a pipe. We had all taken an oath

that any man resorting to such a stratagem should be punished with death. This law was carried into immediate execution, and the two culprits were cast into the sea.

Only twenty-eight of us were now alive, and out of the twenty-eight not more than fifteen seemed able to exist for a few days longer; the others, emaciated, hungry, athirst, fatigued, and covered with large wounds, had lost their reason. However, they shared in our rations, and might, before their death, consume forty bottles of wine; forty bottles, which were to us of inestimable value. We held a council. To put the sick on half rations was to retard their death by a few moments; to leave them without provisions was to doom them to the protracted agony of death by famine. After a long deliberation, we resolved to throw them into the sea. By doing so, we should secure to the survivors provisions for six days, at the rate of three quarts a day. The resolution taken, who was to execute it? The habit of seeing death constantly at hand—our wild despair—the certainty that we must all perish unless we had recourse to this cruel expedient,—everything, in a word, had hardened our hearts, and they had become insensible to every other feeling but that of self-preservation.

Three seamen and a soldier had agreed to act as doomsmen. We turned our faces aside, and shed bitter tears over the fate of these unhappy creatures. This sacrifice saved the fifteen who remained; for when the brig *Argus* fell in with us, we had but a single ration of wine left, and this was on the fifth day after the deplorable occurrence I have just related. The victims had not more than forty-eight hours to live; and by keeping them on the raft, our sustenance would have been spent two days before our deliverance arrived.

After this catastrophe we flung all our arms into the sea; they inspired us with a horror we could not overcome. We

had scarcely wherewithal to spend five days upon the raft. They proved infinitely more painful than any that had preceded them. Our minds were gloomy. Even in our sleep our imagination depicted the mangled limbs of our unhappy comrades, and we invoked death with loud cries. A burning thirst, intensified by the rays of a fiery sun, consumed our very blood; our parched lips sucked with avidity our wine, which we endeavoured to cool in small tin vessels. We sought also to allay it by drinking sea-water; but this diminished our thirst for a moment, only to render it immediately the more acute.

We spent three days in an agony it is impossible to describe. We grew so weary of life, so indifferent to death, that several of us were not afraid to bathe even in sight of the sharks which surrounded our raft. We were convinced that not above twelve or fifteen bottles of wine remained in our cask; but we began to experience an invincible disgust at the flesh which had hitherto served as our nourishment.

On the morning of the 17th, Captain Dupont, raising his eyes towards the horizon, perceived a ship, and announced it to us by a cry of joy. We made out that it was a brig, but at a very great distance; we could do no more than distinguish its topmasts. But this sight was sufficient to excite in us a fever of anticipation. Yet our weakened minds soon alternated from hope to fear; a little reflection convincing us that our raft, from its slight elevation above the water, could not be discovered at any considerable distance. We did all we could to attract observation; we piled up our casks, and on the topmost fixed handkerchiefs of various colours. Unhappily, in spite of all these signals, the brig disappeared. From the delirium of joy we passed to that of grief and dejection. For my part, I envied the fate of those whom I had

seen perish at my side. I then proposed to draw up a record of our sad experiences, to append to it all our signatures, and to attach it to the upper part of the mast, in the hope that some day it might reach our families. Two hours later, the master-gunner uttered a loud shout ; gladness irradiated his countenance ; his arms were stretched towards the sea ; he could scarcely breathe ; in broken accents he gasped out, "We are saved ! Yonder is the brig coming towards us !" It was, in fact, not more than a mile distant ; having all sail spread, and manœuvring to bear down close upon us. Tears of joy flowed from our eyes. Every one laid hold of handkerchiefs, or fragments of linen, in order to make signals to the brig, which was rapidly approaching. Our ecstasy reached its climax when we caught sight of the large white flag fluttering at its mizzen. We exclaimed, "It is to Frenchmen, then, that we shall owe our deliverance !"

The *Argus* was now within two musket-shots of us. The crew upon deck, waving their hats and hands, announced to us the pleasure they felt in bringing relief to their unfortunate countrymen. In a short time we found ourselves on board the *Argus*,—fifteen miserable creatures, with fierce, hollow eyes, and gaunt, emaciated bodies, unexpectedly rescued from what seemed an inevitable death !

Here ends the story of the *Medusa* ; a story with all the horror, but without the poetry, of an Æschylean tragedy.

XVI.

LOSS OF THE "HARPOONER."

November 1816.



THE *Harpooner* transport, homeward bound, with troops from Quebec, struck on Cape Pine, on the night of the 10th of November 1816, when upwards of two hundred persons perished.

On the 26th of October, detachments of the 4th Royal Veteran Battalion, and their families, with a few belonging to other corps in Canada,—in all, three hundred and eighty souls,—embarked on board the ship *Harpooner*, Joseph Bryant, master, and sailed from Quebec on the afternoon of the 27th, bound to Deptford, in charge of Captain Prime.

During their passage to the Gulf of St. Lawrence, the weather was fair and the wind moderate ; but on entering the gulf they were buffeted to and fro by adverse gales ; and so thick a fog prevailed, that for several days not a sight of the land nor an observation of the sun could be depended upon.

On Sunday evening, the 10th of November, a few minutes after nine o'clock, the second mate, who had charge of the watch, suddenly shouted,—“The ship’s aground ;” and it was found that she had lightly struck on the outermost rock of St. Shott’s, off the island of Newfoundland. She beat

over, and forged ahead, but only to strike again. She immediately filled. With cruel rocks around her, and the wind blowing strong, the night dark, and the sea rolling heavily, she soon fell over on her larboard side ; while, to increase the terror and alarm of those on board, it was found that a lighted candle had set fire to some spirits in the master's cabin. The incipient conflagration, however, though not without difficulty, was extinguished.

The ship still beating and grinding against the rocks, her masts were cut away, by which some men were carried overboard. She then drifted over the reef, and towards the deep sea. In this situation the vast crowd on board were seized with a panic terror ; and the sea rushing in suddenly, swept away men, women, and children, while many were killed by the force with which they were driven against the loose baggage, casks, and staves floating below. All who could, clambered upon deck ; but so great was the crowd, and so lamentable the confusion, that the orders given to the seamen and soldiers were either not heard, or disobeyed.

About eleven o'clock, the boats on the deck were washed overboard by a heavy billow. Even from the beginning of the catastrophe, little hope seems to have been entertained that any person would be saved ; and now, with the boats gone, and the bottom of the ship torn away from her upper deck, the bravest man despaired.

From this time until about four A.M., all the poor creatures on board the sea-washed wreck prayed anxiously for the light of dawn ; and as soon as day broke, a stern-boat, which had escaped the fury of the waves, was lowered, and the first mate and four of the seamen, at the imminent peril of their lives, pushed off to the shore. With difficulty they reached the mainland, in the rear of a high rock, near the position into which the stern of the vessel had been driven.

They were soon out of sight, and it was feared they were lost; great, therefore, was the joy of those on board when they were descried on the summit of the cliffs. The mate hailed them, and reported their situation, saying to return was impossible, as the boat was shattered. The log-line was therefore thrown from the vessel, with a hope it might reach them; but the darkness prevented them from getting hold of it.

It then occurred to the master, Joseph Bryant, that it might be possible to send them a rope by a dog. The animal was brought forward, and thrown into the sea, with a line tied round his middle. Gallantly he breasted the waves, and swam towards the rock where the mate and seamen were standing. "It is impossible," says a writer, "to describe the sensations which were excited, at seeing this faithful dog struggling with the waves, and, reaching the summit of the rock, dashed back again by the surf into the sea, until, at length, by his exertions, he arrived with the line, one end of which being on board, a stronger rope was hauled and fastened to the rock; and by this rope the seamen were enabled to drag on shore from the wreck a number of souls."

It was about six o'clock on the morning of the 11th, when the first person was conveyed on shore by this means. Afterwards, by an improvement in rigging the rope, and by placing each individual in slings, the transit to the rock was effected with greater facility. But still it was with the utmost difficulty the unfortunate sufferers could maintain their hold, from the violence with which the waves dashed over them. Some, when hauled ashore, were almost insensible. Lieutenant Wilson was lost, being unable to cling to the rope with his hands; he was twice struck by the sea, fell backwards out of the slings, and after swimming for a considerable



THE PASSAGE OF THE ROPE.

time among the floating spars and timbers, was struck on the head, and perished. Many who jumped overboard, in the hope of saving themselves by swimming, were dashed to pieces by the surf on the rocks, or by the floating timbers of the wreck.

About half-past one on the afternoon of the 11th, about

thirty persons were saved by the rope, though they did not escape without bruises, wounds, and even mutilations. At this period the waters beat incessantly over the wreck ; and just as it became clear that the deck was breaking up, the only means of saving the distressed sufferers failed ; for the rope, through constant work, and by swinging across the sharp rock, was severed in twain. There was no means of replacing it ; and from that sad moment the scene grew more and more terrific : the roar of waters, the rending of timbers, and the cries and last agonizing sobs of men, women, and children, as they clung together in hopeless lamentation,—of men, women, and children, as they were swallowed up by the cruel sea, the cruel, raging sea,—all blending together in a medley of confused sounds, which tore the hearts of the survivors. The wreck breaking up, stern from midships and forecastle, precipitated all upon it into one common destruction ; and two hundred and six persons miserably perished !

The rock on which the survivors had landed rose about one hundred feet above the water, which converted it into an island when the tide flowed. It was found impossible to convey them to the mainland until the following morning. On the summit of the rock they were compelled to remain during the whole of the night, without food or shelter, exposed to a biting wind and a pitiless rain, many of them half clothed and shoeless, their sole comfort a large fire, kindled and fed with pieces of the wreck that had been washed ashore.

At daylight on the morning of the 12th, the tide being low, the removal of the shipwrecked company was happily effected, some being lowered by a rope, others sliding down a ladder to the bottom. After they had crossed to the mainland, they directed their course to a house, or fisherman's shed, distant about a mile and a half from the wreck, where some of them remained until the following day ; but the proprietor of this

miserable hut not having the means of supplying relief to so considerable a number, a large party travelled overland to Trepassy, a distance of fourteen miles, "through a marshy country, uninhabited by any human creature." As soon as the news of the catastrophe reached Trepassy, measures were taken for the relief of all the survivors ; and in due time they were transported to St. John. Here the governor, the commander of the troops, the merchants, and the gentry came forward most promptly and generously to render them every assistance they needed. They were allowed ten days to refresh and recruit themselves, and then embarked on board the ship *Mercury*, of Poole, which conveyed them safely to Portsmouth.

XVII.

A GREAT STORM.

January 1817.



WE propose in the present section to give the reader some faint idea of the mischief that may be wrought upon our British coast by a gale which, to us landsmen safely housed, and only made aware of its violence by creaking windows and a branch or two stripped from our garden-trees, seems little calculated to awaken terror. The misadventures we are about to relate occurred during the continuance of a severe storm which visited the south of England in January 1817, and raged with unusual fury at Plymouth. They will show that not even in sight of land, and in close vicinity to a great town and a spacious harbour, are our seamen exempt from the perils which attend those who go down to the deep in ships.

During the greater part of Sunday, the 19th of January 1817, the veteran mariners who paraded along the quays of Plymouth regarded the weather with considerable anxiety. As the night drew near, the appearance of the sky, and the variations in the condition of the atmosphere, indicated that a storm was rapidly approaching. The wind suddenly veered to the south-south-east, and oscillating at intervals between



Midnight

COAST SCENE IN A STORM.

that quarter and the south-south-west, blew with a fury which, combined with the occurrence of an extraordinary high tide, the fury of the waves, and the intensity of the darkness, gave warning of some awful catastrophe. By four o'clock on Monday morning the tempest had developed, so to speak, into a perfect hurricane, and within two brief hours from that period no fewer than three gallant vessels were dashed to pieces on the coast, within a short distance of each other, and seventy-two lives were lost.

The vessels were the *Jasper* brig of war, Captain Crew, with sixty-seven persons on board, of whom only two were saved; the *Princess Mary* packet, Captain Pocock, which lost six; and the *Telegraph* schooner, Lieutenant Little, which lost one able-bodied seaman. The brig was wrecked on the Boar's Head at Mount Batten; the packet in Deadman's Bay; and the schooner under the Eastern Hoe.

Besides these ill-fated vessels, the *Lapwing*, revenue cutter, lying in Mile Bay—"a place from which a ship was never before known to drive"—parted from her cables, and went ashore in this very bay, being carried high and dry over a ridge of rocks with comparatively little injury. It was found impossible to extricate her from her singular situation until a passage had been made for her by blowing up the rocks. The sea was so heavy that it was thought she would have foundered at her anchors had not her cables parted.

It is recorded that these accidents occurred with so great a swiftness as to render it impossible for any relief to be sent from the shore, even if the condition of the sea had permitted it.

The *Jasper* went to pieces in less than five minutes after taking the ground, which it appears she did in a vain effort to reach Catwater. On Sunday evening the commanding officer of the brig (Mr. Smith, the master), anticipating that

the weather, which was then very bad, would become worse, ordered her topmasts to be struck, and every possible preparation made to ease the vessel. At eleven o'clock, the gale having increased to an alarming degree, and blowing from south-south-west, she parted her best bower-cable; the sheet-anchor was immediately let go, and veered to a cable; and it was intended also to veer the small bower to two cables, but in the act of doing so it parted. The vessel now hung by the sheet-anchor only, but still drove fast. At about four o'clock on Monday morning, the master, perceiving that the brig was drawing in very close to the shore, determined on cutting the cable, and making an attempt to run into Catwater. For this purpose the cable was cut, and the fore-trysail and fore-staysail set; but, owing to the dense darkness of the night, she struck on the Boar's Head at Mount Batten, and, as we have already stated, immediately became a total wreck.

The *Telegraph* rode out the gale very satisfactorily until three o'clock in the morning, when she drove fast, with three anchors ahead. After she had been driving for some time, her commander, finding that her anchors did not bring her up, resolved to run her into the sheltered inlet of Catwater; but the wind veering at this time more to the southward, rendered it impossible to clear Garrison Point. Her only chance of safety depended on her weathering the gale where she lay; that is, within a cable's length of the rocks under the Hoe. But by half-past five o'clock, the incessant violence of the gale had driven her much nearer to the shore, and her stern struck on a sunken rock. All hope of rescuing the vessel was then abandoned, and whether the lives of the crew could be saved seemed a matter of doubt. The vessel's cables, however, were immediately cut; her fore-staysail was hoisted; and thus her broadside was brought towards the shore,—the

sea all the time pouring billow after billow clean over the doomed ship. In five minutes she was full of water. Had she not been, providentially, cast ashore in such a position as to leave but a very short distance between the gangway and a high projecting rock, on which the crew landed, every soul on board of her must have perished. They had scarcely left the vessel before she was literally *pounded* into a thousand fragments by the boiling surf.

“After a night of horrors, easier to be conceived than related, at the morning’s dawn the sea was found covered with floating wreck of different descriptions, interspersed with dead bodies, which, being taken up, were carried ashore, and conveyed to the workhouse in sad and frequent succession.”*

* We quote this quaintly-worded paragraph from the *Plymouth Telegraph* for January 22, 1817.

XVIII.

LOSS OF THE "ALCESTE."

February 1817.



THE *Alceste*, a fine frigate of forty-six guns, commanded by a tried and well-approved officer, Captain, afterwards Sir Murray Maxwell, sailed from Manilla for England on the 9th of February 1817, having on board Lord Amherst and his suite, then returning from an embassy to the court of Peking.

Captain Maxwell directed the ship's course to be steered towards the Straits of Gaspar, in preference to those of Borneo, as affording at the monsoon season the swiftest and safest channel of egress from the Chinese seas. According to the charts, they were broader, had a much greater depth of water, and presented fewer difficulties to navigation.

The *Alceste* made the island of Gaspar on the 18th, and soon afterwards Pulo Laut, or Middle Island, was descried from the mast-head. The weather was clear and pleasant; a gentle breeze blew from the north-west; and the surface of the water was gently agitated by the current which perpetually sets through the straits, either to the north-east or south-west, according to the monsoon.

The sea is usually limpid and bright in these regions, but having been greatly discoloured that morning by a quantity

of fish spawn, and the navigation consequently rendered more dangerous, unusual precautions were taken to insure the safety of the vessel. Look-outs were stationed at the foretop-masthead, and others at the fore-yard-arms; Captain Maxwell, with the master and other officers, were constantly on deck; soundings were continuously taken; and the frigate was following the express line prescribed by all concurring directions, when, at about half-past seven in the morning, she struck with a terrible crash on a reef of sunken rocks, and remained immovable. "What my feelings were," says Captain Maxwell, "at this momentary transition from a state of perfect security to all the horrors of shipwreck, I will not venture to depict; but I must acknowledge it required whatever mental energy I possessed to control them, and to enable me to give with coolness and firmness the necessary orders preparatory to abandoning the ship,—which a very short period of hard working at all the pumps showed the impracticability of saving."

The carpenter soon reported the water above the tanks in the main-hold, and in a few minutes more over the orlop-deck.

Meantime the quarter-boats had been lowered for sounding, and from their reports it appeared that there was deep water all round the reef; so that the *Alceste* lay, as it were, on the summit of a submarine mountain. It was evident, therefore, that the preservation of the crew depended on the vessel's maintaining her then position, for if once dislodged from it, she could not fail to sink in deep water.

In this conjuncture, Captain Maxwell's first thought was for the safety of Lord Amherst and his suite. In less than an hour the boats were all got out, and the ambassador and his attendants embarked in them. They were accompanied by a guard of marines, and conveyed to the island of Pulo

Laut—between three and four miles distant—where, it was hoped, fresh water and tropical fruits might freely be obtained.

While the boats were away, a party of men and officers exerted themselves to get up what provisions they could out of the hold,—which was now under water,—while another party was engaged in constructing a raft. The boats returned in the afternoon, and reported that they had experienced great difficulty in landing the embassy, from the belt of mangrove-trees which almost surrounded the island. They also reported that neither food nor water could be discovered. Captain Maxwell, however, knew they had no alternative but to avail themselves of this inhospitable spot, and continued to press on the necessary preparations for leaving the ship. These were duly completed, and by eight o'clock in the evening all the crew and marines were landed, except one division, who, with the captain, first lieutenant, and other officers, remained on board the wreck.

The wind rising about midnight, and the ship heeling greatly to windward, the topmasts were cut away to prevent her falling over; but as, towards daylight, the gale moderated, and the ship remained stationary, all apprehensions were removed. Before seven o'clock in the morning the boats again made their appearance, but without any good tidings of the capabilities of their island-prison. The provisions that had been collected, part of the baggage of the embassy, and clothes and bedding of the men and officers, were then embarked upon the raft, and conveyed ashore.

In the course of the forenoon Captain Maxwell paid a visit to Lord Amherst, to confer as to their further movements; leaving the *Alceste* in charge of the first lieutenant, with orders that every effort should be made to obtain a further supply of provisions and water, and that a boat should keep

alongside the wreck, in case of any sudden catastrophe. Captain Maxwell reached the shore about half-past eleven, to find the ambassador and his suite, and the officers and men of the *Alceste*, in the midst of an unwholesome salt-water marsh.

"The spot in which our party were situated," says Mr. M'Leod, "was sufficiently romantic, but seemed at the same time the abode of ruin and havoc. Few of its inhabitants (and among the rest the ambassador) had now more than a shirt and a pair of trousers on. The wreck of books, or, as it was not inaptly termed, 'a literary manure,' was spread about in all directions; whilst parliamentary robes, court dresses, and mandarin habits, intermixed with check shirts and tarry jackets, were hung around in wild confusion on every tree."

In a conference with Lord Amherst and Mr. Ellis, the second commissioner, Captain Maxwell decided that the embassy should proceed to Batavia in the barge and cutter, with a guard of marines to defend the boats from any attack of the Malayan pirates. If they arrived there in safety, Mr. Ellis would secure the first vessel that could be had, and return immediately to the succour of those left upon the island.

At sunset, therefore, on the 19th, two of the largest boats, under the command of Lieutenant Hoppner and Mr. Mayne, and having on board forty-seven persons and a small stock of provisions, sailed from the island.

Relieved, as far as was possible, from further anxiety about the embassy, Captain Maxwell directed his attention to the comfort and shelter of his crew. As, for two days successively, each man had had barely a pint of water, they began to suffer severely from thirst; and the captain's first care, therefore, was to order out a party to dig in search of water. With the others he prepared to remove the encampment to a

higher locality, as a measure necessary both on defensive and sanitary grounds.

On the summit of a hill the men accordingly threw up a rude kind of palisading, and thither they transported their supplies of provisions. A small detachment was ordered off to the wreck, to save any articles at all likely to prove of service. Towards midnight the men, who were much harassed by their parched lips and dry throats, were refreshed by a plentiful shower of rain, which they caught in tablecloths and sheets, afterwards wringing out of these the welcome moisture. The diggers were then able to report that they had discovered a spring or well, and a small bottle of it was sent to the captain as a sample. As soon as the news spread abroad, the rush to the well was so general and so precipitate, that Captain Maxwell was forced to place sentries around it, to keep off intruders and prevent any obstruction of the work.

On the following morning the crew were assembled by their commander, who, in a pithy but earnest speech, reminded them of the peculiarities of their position: he impressed upon them the fact that they were still seamen of the Royal Navy, and subject to its rules of discipline; these, he said, he should enforce for the good and safety of all. He added that each man should receive an equal portion of the provisions until the expected assistance reached them from Batavia. The well at this time provided them with about a pint of water per head, which is described as tasting like milk and water, but when flavoured with rum, making a very agreeable beverage.

During the 20th very little was rescued from the wreck, the whole of the stores being deep under water.

On the 21st, the men working on board the ship discovered a small flotilla of proas, carrying Malays all armed, steering towards them. Immediately they took to their boats, and

rowed in all haste for the land. The pirates, descrying their movements, made chase after them, and did not retreat until they saw some other boats putting off to the rescue. Then they abandoned the pursuit, and took possession of the wreck.



MALAY PROAS.

The crew of the *Alceste* were by no means alarmed at the appearance of these cruel savages, whose ferocity formerly made them the terror of the Malayan seas. Mr. M'Leod, to whose interesting narrative of the wreck of the *Alceste* all later writers have been much indebted, remarks that under all the depressing circumstances which surrounded them—hunger, thirst, fatigue, and the proximity of a ruthless foe—it was glorious to see the British spirit stanch and unsubdued. “The order was given for every man to arm himself in the best manner he could, and it was obeyed with the utmost promptitude and alacrity. Rude pike staves were formed by cutting down young trees; small swords, dirks, knives, chisels, and even large spike-nails sharpened, were firmly fixed to the end of these poles; and those who could find nothing better hardened the end of the wood in the fire, and, bringing it to a sharp point, formed a tolerable weapon. There were perhaps a dozen cutlasses; the marines had about thirty muskets

and bayonets, but we could muster no more than seventy-five ball cartridges among the whole party."

Fortunately they had preserved some loose gunpowder, drawn from the upper-deck guns after the ship had struck—for the magazines were under water in five minutes—and the marines, by hammering their buttons round, and by rolling up fragments of broken bottles in cartridges, contrived to supply themselves with a novel kind of shot, which at close quarters would not be ineffective. And strict orders were issued that no man should fire until sure of his aim; the supply of ammunition was much too small to allow of its reckless expenditure.

Mr. Cheffy, the carpenter, and his crew, under Captain Maxwell's direction, were occupied in the construction of an *abattis* by felling trees, and in enclosing the area of the camp with a circular fortification. With the stakes driven in among the trees loose branches were interwoven; and by this means a breastwork was fashioned, which afforded the men some cover, and was no slight obstacle to the progress of any enemy unsupplied with artillery.

Captain Maxwell, knowing that the Malays would be sure to make an attack upon him, resolved to give them a warm reception. It was true he had but a small force, while the numbers of the savages were hourly increasing. True, too, that many of his men were wholly unarmed, or carried but very imperfect weapons. Yet when, in the evening, he called a general muster, he found them, one and all, so inspired by a spirit of heroic ardour, that he did not fear the approach of any enemy. Even the boys had fastened table-forks to the end of stout sticks, as better weapons than none. One who, having been severely bruised by the falling of the masts, was slung in a hammock between two trees, had been observed carefully fixing, with a couple of sticks and a rope-yarn, the

blade of an old razor. On being asked what he intended to do with it, he replied: "You know I cannot stand; but if any of those black fellows come within reach of my hammock, I'll mark 'em."

Every precaution having been taken to prevent a surprise, Captain Maxwell next endeavoured to open amicable negotiations with the Malays. These, however, speedily failed; and Mr. Hay, the second lieutenant, was then despatched to the wreck, with the barge, cutter, and gig, tolerably well armed, to drive the Malays out of her. As soon as they saw the boats approaching, the pirates set fire to the wreck, and then escaped in their proas. The unfortunate *Alceste* burned throughout the night; but this proved an advantage to the English, as many of the stores were floated up from below when the upper works had been destroyed, and thus were easily recovered.

For the next few days the crew were busily occupied in collecting whatever they could get at in the hull of the *Alceste*; and it was with no small pleasure they rescued several barrels of flour, some cases of wine, and a barrel of beer; while they added to their military stores no fewer than eighteen muskets and thirty-seven boarding-pikes. By this time a second well had been sunk on shore, and the supply of water was abundant.

It must be owned that the prospects of the castaways were now considerably brighter. They had shelter, food, water, and ammunition. The Malays had disappeared, and though it was understood by all that they had only gone for reinforcements, the crew awaited their return with the calm conviction that they could easily thrash any number of them. Meantime, the gunner was engaged in manufacturing cartridges, and in casting in clay moulds a stock of balls from lead

found on board the wreck. A steady discipline was maintained; the provisions were served out with strict impartiality; and the most cordial feeling existed between the crew and their officers.

On the morning of the 26th, two pirate proas approached the island, as if to observe the movements of the English. Lieutenant Hay ordered cutter, barge, and gig to be immediately manned, dashed away in pursuit, and gallantly closed with them. The struggle was short but sharp. Lieutenant Hay killed two of the savages with his own hand, another was shot down, a fourth was stunned; the others, seeing resistance was impossible, flung themselves into the sea, and were drowned: they were willing to perish, but not to submit. During the struggle, an officer on the beach observed that a canoe had drifted away from one of the proas. He jumped into the sea, and swam off to secure it. A huge shark followed him. His comrades, standing on the beach, discovered his danger, but held their peace, lest they should alarm him by their cries. Ignorant of his peril, therefore, he struck out vigorously, reached the canoe, embarked in it, and returned to the shore in safety.

In the course of the day a number of proas were seen approaching from the side of Banca. They were hailed with exultation, in the belief that they were a party from Batavia coming to their rescue. The Malays on board of them, however, had visited the island in search of a certain kind of edible sea-weed. The captain hoped they might be induced by the promise of a reward to carry a part of the crew to Java; in which case the four boats would have sufficed to accommodate the remainder. But the savages no sooner caught sight of the wreck than they all crowded round her, and pillaged her of everything that remained on board.

The prospects of the castaways again began to darken. The stores of provisions were diminishing, and to prevent their entire exhaustion before assistance should arrive, Captain Maxwell saw it would be necessary to prepare for an attempt at escaping from the island. He resolved upon constructing a raft sufficiently large to accommodate all those whom the boats could not embark. But, before this could be done, a struggle appeared imminent with the Malays, whose force had been increased by the arrival of several proas. Early on Sunday morning, the 2nd of March, the whole body of pirates made towards the island, yelling and shouting, and beating their gongs, and firing off their matchlocks, and finally anchoring within a cable's length of the shore.

Captain Maxwell made an attempt to enter into negotiations with the savages, but soon discovered that he could not rely upon their loyalty. Their force was continually augmenting, and in the course of the day had increased to fifty proas, with at least five hundred men on board. It was evidently their object to massacre the Europeans for the sake of plunder; and in the evening Captain Maxwell mustered his men, informed them that a speedy attack might be anticipated, but assured them that if they displayed their usual courage and resolution, they could not fail to be victorious. To his spirited words the men replied with three spirited British cheers.

When the morning dawned, it was found that the enemy's fleet had received an addition of ten proas, carrying another hundred men. Captain Maxwell now felt undecided whether he should embark his men, and boldly dash at the proas, in the hope of inflicting upon them a chastisement which should prevent any further molestation, or whether he should keep strictly on the defensive. While he was deliberating, one of the officers climbed a tall tree, and reported that he could make out something like a sail on the horizon. A look-out

was immediately sent up with a glass, and he announced the welcome tidings that a vessel, under press of canvas, was making rapidly towards the island. She proved to be the *Ternate*, despatched by Lord Amherst to their assistance. As she drew near, the pirate fleet rapidly took to flight, pursued by a parting volley from the exultant crew. All were soon embarked on board her, and arrived safely at Batavia, where they experienced a most hospitable reception.

Thus, through the calmness and admirable management of Captain Maxwell, and the willing obedience of his crew, the wreck of the *Alceste* was unattended by any signal misfortune

XIX.

LOSS OF THE "WILLIAM AND MARY."

October 1817.



THE *William and Mary*, Morley master, was a packet trading regularly between Bristol and Waterford. She was lost in the Bristol Channel on the night of the 23rd of October 1817, under very distressing circumstances.

The *William and Mary* sailed from Bristol at nine o'clock on Thursday the 23rd. The night was fine; the wind fair; and there was every reason to calculate on a rapid and favourable passage. The mate was placed in charge of the helm; but instead of attending to his duty, he amused himself with talking to a female friend on board, and left the steering to a man who appeared a stranger to the perils of the Welsh coast. About eleven o'clock the vessel suddenly struck on the Wolf Rock, which lies about three miles north-west of the Holmes Lighthouse. At this unexpected disaster the captain rushed upon deck, and exclaimed to the mate, "John, you have lost the lives of all on board; I never could trust you; had I a sword I would run you through." Recriminations, however, were useless; in fifteen minutes it was found that the ship was in a sinking state, and the passengers filled the air with their cries of alarm. The scene which followed was truly

dreadful. There was but one boat on board, and this a very small one. It was soon filled, chiefly by the crew, and put off for the Welsh shore. Almost immediately afterwards the vessel sank. Her topmast remained a few feet above the water, and to this support some of the crew and passengers clung until the boat returned.

Among the passengers were a Mr. Barron, his mother, and four sisters; the cries of the young ladies were most heart-rending: they perished in each other's arms. A Lieutenant Theballier, of the 35th Regiment, was saved; but his wife was drowned. All the females on board, twenty-two in number, and two children, met "a watery grave." The master, Mr. Morley, was drowned; the rest of the crew escaped. One of the survivors afterwards related that before he was picked up he saw Mr. Barron near him in the water. He endeavoured to encourage him; but the poor man had only strength enough to answer, in a feeble voice, "I can go no further," and sank beneath the waves.

The following additional particulars are recorded by a Bristol newspaper, and quoted in the *Naval Chronicle* for 1817:—

"John Hayes, passenger, late mate of a vessel trading to Honduras, went on board at Pill, and when he joined the crew and passengers were about sixty in number. At eight o'clock the vessel sailed from Pill. The captain appeared perfectly sober. About ten the captain went below, told the passengers all was right, and recommended them to retire to rest: he then lay down in his clothes on the deck, leaving his mate, John Onterbridge, at the helm. Somewhat near eleven, Hayes, who was on deck, felt a shock as if the vessel had grounded; and the captain, as if awaking from sleep, cried out, 'Hallo! what is the matter?'

“The passengers at the same moment were seen running in all directions, and crowding round the captain in a state of the greatest alarm; and although he endeavoured to pacify them, he could not help manifesting his sense of their imminent danger.

“Discovering that there were already three feet of water in the pump, the crew, consisting of the steward and three sailors, deserted their stations and flew to the boat; and it is reported that, not being able to prevail on three females who had crept into it to quit their situation, they lowered the stern so far as to admit water, and thereby threatened their immediate destruction. Upon this the ladies, with the assistance of these *brutes*, scrambled on board the packet, when the inhuman wretches took possession of the boat, and cut the ropes. John Hayes, during this time, took possession of the helm, and being assisted by some of the passengers in managing the sails, brought the packet from thirty to six fathoms water, leaving the boat more than half a mile astern. This was scarcely effected when the vessel went suddenly to the bottom. Hayes succeeded, by passing hand-over-hand, in getting up one of the ropes to the topmast, on which about fourteen others had collected. From this dreadful situation they were relieved by a Pill yawl, or skiff, and taken to Cardiff.

“It is revolting to humanity to relate that a female has been found near the wreck stripped of every article of apparel, excepting a pair of silk stockings; one of her ear-rings had also been taken. It is evident that she could not have been thus circumstanced but from the barbarous cupidity of some persons who had plundered the body, and then unfeelingly recommitted it to the waves. Captain Brown, commanding another packet in the same service, put to sea immediately he heard of the fatal accident, for the purpose of rendering all

possible assistance; and two days after the wreck took up the corpse in the state above described."

The Wolf or Wolves' Rock, on which the *William and Mary* was so unfortunately lost,—the *Wollies*, as it is familiarly called by seamen,—is a rocky ledge in the Bristol Channel, visible at something lower than half-tide. It lies about twenty-two English miles below King's Road, the mouth of the Bristol river, and about twelve to the south of Cardiff. It is near the Welsh shore, less than three miles from Lavernock Point, and about a mile and a half north-west from the Northern or Flat Holm, upon which there is a lighthouse. The passage to the west of the Flat Holm is something shorter than the eastern course between the Flat Holm and the Steep Holm; but experience has too often proved that it is full of danger.*

* *Naval Chronicle*, vol. xxxviii., p. 484

XX.

WRECK OF THE "NEPTUNE."

December 24, 1821



THE brig *Neptune*, of Boulogne, a small coasting-vessel of one hundred and fifty tons, and a crew of eight men, sailed from Cette, at half-past seven on the morning of the 20th December 1821, loaded with wine and brandy. The weather was fair, and the wind blew gently from the south-west.

An hour later, the wind freshened considerably; but both on the 21st and the 22nd the sky was clear and cloudless as in summer, and the weather would not have discomposed the most timid of "land-lubbers."

On the 23rd, however, "a change came o'er the spirit of the scene;" the heavens hung heavily with gloomy clouds, and the sea, lashed by a south-westerly gale, rolled its billows like ranks of foaming war-horses.

On the 24th, the storm grew terrible, and severely tested the good qualities of the *Neptune*, which was then abreast of Barcelona, at about ten leagues from the land. About seven o'clock the crew noticed with alarm, on the vane of the main-mast, the appearance of the meteoric phenomenon known as "St. Elmo's Fire;" always regarded by the superstitious sailors of the South as a fatal omen. It was succeeded by an

overpowering glare of lightning, which lasted for about two seconds. The captain ordered all hands on deck to take in sail, and then with bare poles ran before the wind.

Here we take up the narrative of one of the little crew, Bénigne Bouret by name.

He describes the darkness as profound: flashes of lightning, accompanied by violent thunder-claps, threw, at intervals, a ghastly radiance around. The pumps were kept constantly at work, in the hope they would suffice to keep the vessel afloat. Soon afterwards, it was found that a hogshead of brandy had got loose in the hold. The captain and mate hastened to the spot, and fastened it up again. A moment afterwards, the rolling of several casks was heard, but it was no longer possible to attempt to stow them more securely.

The wind, says Bouret, continued to increase in violence. At half-past nine it was my turn at the pump. The ship heeled over sadly, receiving a succession of seas broadside on, which made it reel and stagger like a drunken man. A few minutes later I perceived that we were falling more and more to leeward, and, looking from the opposite side, I could see that part of the vessel suddenly lifted up. I sprang forward to seize the shrouds, when I heard the lieutenant exclaim, "Look at the ship!" and another voice, "Have mercy, O God!" At the same moment, the brig capsized.

I clung convulsively to the rigging, though retaining but a glimmering of consciousness, which I soon lost altogether. How long I remained in this state I cannot tell. At length, the ship having righted herself, the ripple of the waters on my face restored me to my senses. I opened my eyes; once more I could see the lightnings cleaving the gloomy clouds which swept across the heavens, and my first thoughts rose in prayer and thanksgiving to God.

Still I clung to the shrouds; and at a favourable moment

climbed to the main-yard, calling out several times to know what I was to do.

No one answered. I continued to shout. Some groans fell upon my ear, but were soon lost in the roar of the tempest. I was frozen with terror! At length a voice seemed to articulate a few words which I could not understand. Then I carefully let myself down along the side of



WRECK OF THE "NEPTUNE."

the ship which was raised above the water, when the billows every now and then abated, and I caught sight of Voisin, the apprentice, seated upon the shrouds, with the ship-dog beside him. He clasped my hand, sighing, "It seems that all our comrades have perished; what will become of *us*?"

Towards eleven o'clock the mizzen-mast and bowsprit broke at a few feet above the deck; the topmast also disappeared; and only the main-mast and main-topmast stood. The ship,

relieved of this weight, rose a little, and Voisin and I clambered to the topmast. I set to work to detach the main-yard, the sail of which was unfurled; with my clasp-knife I cut away the stays that held it, and succeeded in toppling the whole upon the deck. Overcome with fatigue, and soaked to the skin, though the waves no longer reached us, we fastened ourselves securely in the main-top, and indulged in a prolonged sleep.

The weather continued the same throughout the 25th. We were unable to descend to the deck, on account of the waves which covered it at intervals with the greatest violence. We could see the casks forced out of the hold, and soon afterwards dashed into fragments. We caught sight of two brigs at a few leagues' distance, beating to windward. The sky, overspread with dense clouds, brightened occasionally; our clothes had dried; and the hope that these vessels might close with us enabled us to pass the night in tranquillity.

On the 26th we saw a brig, which I presumed to be one of those we had sighted the day before, running towards us, and for some minutes were plunged in an ecstasy of joy. In the afternoon it passed to leeward, at no great distance from us. We could distinguish the people on board. It would seem, however, that they did not see us, for she kept on her course, and gradually receded from sight. Towards evening, the weather becoming clear, we thought we could detect on the horizon two points of land.

After a restless night, we saw once more the dawn of day. Alas, it came but to pour light on our bitter sufferings, which would soon terminate, we thought, in the peacefulness of death!

About mid-day, perceiving a cloak upon the ship's bulwarks, I resolved to descend in the hope of extricating it, in

spite of the waves which broke over the vessel. We saw, too, through the opening of the cabin, a cask which the sea had not been able to force out of it; it floated almost on a level with the deck. I wanted the apprentice to join me in an attempt to stave it; but he could not, owing to his weakness, and to his feet being swollen with the cold. Having reached the deck, I was forced to cling to the stump of the mast, to prevent myself from being carried away by the waves. As they retired, I advanced, and dealt a blow at the cask with an iron bolt; almost immediately I was compelled to beat a retreat, but returned to the attack without delay. At length I succeeded in beating in the top of the cask, which proved to be one of brandy. Hastily I dipped my hat in the liquor, and was about to raise it to my lips, when a wave broke over me, and I lost in an instant the fruit of my labours. Again I dipped my hat in the cask; but the liquor had lost its value, and had hardly strength enough to mitigate slightly the bitterness of the salt water. I could not drink more than a mouthful or two. Almost desperate, I reascended to the main-top, with the cloak under my arm, and my hat in my hand. The apprentice made an effort to drink, but could not stomach it; and we remained a prey to all the sufferings of the most intense thirst.

Shortly afterwards we saw the dead body of a sailor float out of the cabin, along with the wreck of its furniture. The unfortunate man, whose fate we envied, had his head still resting on his arm, as if death had come upon him in his sleep. I wished to descend and remove his waistcoat, in order to cover my comrade. But he would not let me, saying, "What would become of me if the sea carried you away?" Not the less I had determined to descend, but the corpse had disappeared.

In the afternoon I hoisted up a rude kind of sail, which I hoped would carry the brig towards the shore. But the wind changing, I was forced to haul it down, lest it should drive us out to sea.

On the 28th, the waves ran very high, and nearly overwhelmed us in the main-top: wet to the skin, cold, hungry, and athirst, we suffered tortures which no language can describe.

The ship-dog had remained, meanwhile, on the fore-castle. The sea would carry it off; then it swam back to its post. It fixed its eyes upon us, and wailed and moaned in the most pitiable manner. At night, more particularly, its howlings were frightful; and they added, if that were possible, to the terrors which perturbed us. On this day his strength seemed spent; however, he struggled against death, until a wave engulfed him.

On the 29th, as on the day preceding, no sail was visible; and we were cheered by no gleam of hope. My comrade suffered such cruel pains in the stomach, that he told me, even if we were saved, he did not think it possible he could ever again take any food. Feeling myself stronger than he was, and not having lost all my courage, I endeavoured to support and console him. Thirst tormented me more cruelly than hunger; and I opened my mouth to inhale the breeze, trusting it would afford some slight relief.

Thus glided by the few days of existence which still remained to us. When our sufferings and the rolling sea allowed us to enjoy a few short moments of calm, all the horrors of our position broke upon our imagination. I wept, when I thought of my wife and children; my wife who, on

my parting with her, had suffered greatly, as if from a presentiment that she should see me no more.

Up to the 1st of January no accident interrupted the sombre monotony of our torment, which was continually increasing. The wind blew violently; the ship heeled over more and more. In one of her movements a wave swept over our heads. A few seconds afterwards, the ship having righted a little, we undid our fastenings, and removed to the other side of the main-top, which was less exposed to the rush of the waters. When I had settled myself, I turned to assist my companion, but could not see him. He had been carried away by the waves. As soon as I could catch sight of him, I threw him a rope, which he seized; but, with a failing voice, he almost immediately said, "My efforts are useless; I can no longer endure my sufferings; I would rather die." He let go the rope, and disappeared.

Then I was alone, and alone in a kind of mental blank: I knew not if I were still living. In the evening my mouth was so dry that I could no longer breathe; I choked.

On the 2nd I was still strong enough to descend by the rigging. I took some water, and washed my face, mouth, and hands. I felt some relief.

Nine days had passed by since I had tasted food, and my energies were exhausted. Fastened to the main-top, and scarcely able to make another effort, I felt the keenest agony. Continually growing drowsy, painful dreams wearied my imagination almost to deliriousness. Yet a Heaven-sent idea still supported me: I seemed to see my wife and children, and to hear them bidding me not to lose hope; that I suffered much, but should be saved. The illusion constantly recurred,

and threw a faint light on the feeble existence which flickered within my exhausted frame.

In this state I passed through the day of the 3rd and the following night. My sight was troubled. The sky seemed on fire, the stars of enormous magnitude, the radiance of the moon so dazzled my eyes that I could not support it.

On the 4th of January, at daybreak, I threw my feeble glances round the horizon, but no object was visible. Alas ! another day of suffering ! And I fell into a deep slumber or swoon. How long I remained unconscious I cannot tell. Suddenly, I thought I heard some voices saying, " Rise up ; you are saved." It was but a freak of my imagination ; no one was near me. The voices again aroused me. I opened my eyes, and perceived, at no great distance from me, the canvas of a ship, on which the sun shone with all its splendour. A moment afterwards a boat drew near ; the crew released me from my bonds, and carried me on board their ship, which proved to be the Dutch galliot *Good-Hoope*. Its commander, Captain Klein, hastened to bestow on me every attention which my unfortunate situation demanded. When I was somewhat restored, he told me that he had sighted the submerged ship, and thought everybody on board had perished, but had ordered his crew to approach the wreck as closely as possible, in case there should be a survivor. To this generous resolution I owed my life.

After a few days sail we arrived at Toulon, and my sad experiences were over.*

* *Annales Maritimes et Coloniales*, 1822, Part II.—The reader should compare this narrative with that of the English seamen who escaped from the wreck of the *La Plata*.

XXI.

LOSS OF THE "DRAKE."

June 1822.



STORIES of heroism help to make those who read them heroic ; to inspire them with some particle of that noble fire which has glowed in the hearts of others, and animated them to gallant deeds. Listen, therefore, to the following simple but pregnant narrative.

The *Drake*, a ten-gun brig, commanded by Captain Charles Baker, was despatched, by the British commander-in-chief on the Newfoundland station, upon special duty to Halifax.

Having discharged the mission with which he had been intrusted, Captain Baker set sail to return to St. John's, on Thursday morning, the 20th of June 1822. He had every reason to anticipate a speedy and prosperous voyage, for the wind was fair, and sea and sky were calm with the tranquillity of summer.

Nor, in fact, did aught occur to check his sanguine hopes until Sunday morning, when the slow thickening of the atmosphere indicated the approach of one of those heavy fogs for which the coast of Newfoundland is unhappily famous.

Of these fogs, not even those who have known the November murkiness of London, or the dense mists which rise so frequently about the Highland hills, can form an idea. A

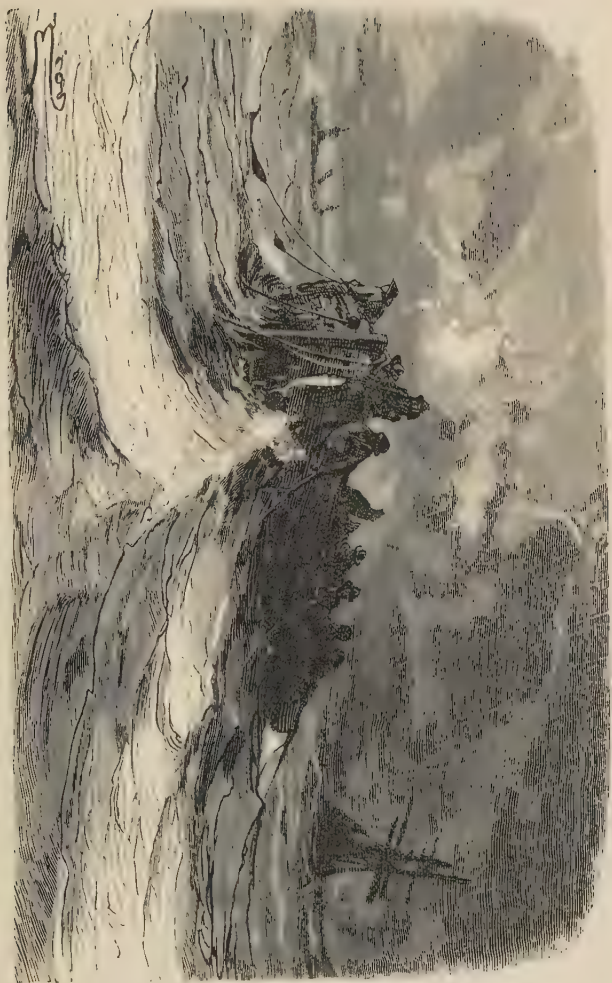
Newfoundland fog is something unique and unparalleled ; cold, dank, clinging, impenetrable : it follows you everywhere, surrounds you as in a shroud ; the gloom is continual ; night and day are merged into one another ; and on board ship, the sails, heavy with vapour, flap against the masts with a dreary ominous sound, while the boldest heart and brightest spirit yield to the oppressive atmospheric influence.

Frequently it happens that, in spite of all the patient vigilance of the look-out men, the bows of the vessel drive with a crash across some unfortunate fishing-boat ; and before a voice can be raised in warning, a shock, and a shriek, and a sudden commotion of the waves,—and all is over ! The ship pursues her stately course to the haven under the hill ; but no trace remains of the feeble bark and her crew—a father, a husband, a son—for whom wet eyes will watch in vain day after day, and night after night, until all hope perishes, and the loving heart abandons itself to the vanity of grief.

But, as an experienced authority observes, it is a curious characteristic of these fogs—in which, indeed, they resemble a Highland mist—that they frequently do not extend over any considerable area ; so that a vessel, after drifting about in the dusk for hours, will suddenly come upon its sharp, distinct boundary, and emerge all at once, like a traveller escaping from a labyrinthine wood, into the glorious light of an unclouded day.

Mr. Gilly quotes an instance of this phenomenon from Captain Basil Hall :—

The *Cambrian*, says that well-known writer and skilful officer, had run in from sea towards the coast, enveloped in a fog such as I have attempted to describe. Her officers took it for granted that the lighthouse and the adjacent land, including Halifax, were similarly shrouded with an impenetrable canopy of mist ; but it so chanced that, on this par-



APPROACH OF A NEWFOUNDLAND FOG.

ticular occasion, the fog was confined to the deep water, so that the landsmen idling along the shore could see it at a distance of several miles, accumulated on the ocean like a huge stratum or bank of snow, with an abrupt front towards the coast.

The *Cambrian*, lost in the midst of this fog-bank, and supposing herself to be near land, fired a gun. The lighthouse duly replied; and so the ship and the lighthouse answered gun by gun for half a day, without seeing one another.

The lighthouse keepers had no means of informing Captain Hall, that if he would only stand on a little further, his ship would emerge from the cloud in which, like Jupiter Olympius of old, she was discharging her thunder. At last, hopeless of its clearing up, he gave orders to pipe to dinner; but as the weather, always excepting this tedious and troublesome haze, was quite fine, and the ship still in deep water, he directed her to be steered towards the shore, while the lead was kept constantly going. As one o'clock approached, he began to feel uneasy, from the water shoaling, and the lighthouse guns sounding closer and closer; but being reluctant to disturb the men at their dinner, he resolved to "stand on" for the ten minutes which yet belonged to them. Lo and behold! the ship had not advanced above half a mile, when her flying jib-boom end emerged from the maze of fog; then the bowsprit shot into the daylight; and lastly the ship herself glided out of the cloud into "the full blaze of a bright and 'sunshiny holiday.'" All hands were instantly turned up to make sail. And the men, as they rushed upon deck, could scarcely credit their senses when they saw behind them the fog-bank, right ahead the harbour's mouth, with the bold cliffs of Cape Sambro on the left; and further still, the ships at their moorings, with their ensigns and pendants blowing out light and dry in the breeze.

But this is a digression. Let us return to the *Drake* and her gallant crew.

Towards noon, the weather cleared for about a quarter of an hour, by which Captain Baker profited to take an observation of the latitude. According to his reckoning, they were about ninety-one miles from Cape Race, and fifty-one from Cape St. Mary's.

He therefore maintained an easterly course until about six o'clock in the evening, when, the breeze freshening, and the *Drake* having run sixty miles since noon, she was hauled off to south-east.

At this time the fog was so dense that the men could not see twenty yards beyond the ship. But as Captain Baker had been ordered to make the utmost possible despatch, he determined to continue his course. Every precaution, meanwhile, was taken: the lead was continually used; look-out men were stationed in every part of the brig. In this manner they proceeded—literally *feeling* their way—until about half-past seven o'clock, when the watch at the bows shouted out—“Breakers ahead! Hard a-starboard!” Without a moment's delay the ship was hauled to the wind; but being unable to clear the danger on that tack, every effort was made to *stay* the vessel. The sea, however, rolled with tremendous force, and while she was in stays her stem took the breakers, and she immediately fell broadside on, with the waves dashing violently over her.

At the moment the ship struck, all the crew were on deck; but their discipline was so admirable, and their confidence in their commander so great, that though the extreme peril was obvious to every one, not the slightest disorder took place. Captain Baker's first thought was to cut away the masts, so as to lighten the vessel, and afford the means, perhaps, of

saving some of the crew. His command was promptly obeyed, but had not the desired result : in a few minutes the ship bilged, and the destruction of all on board seemed inevitable.

Captain Baker then ordered the cutter to be launched ; but she had scarcely cleared the gangway before she sank.

Terrible was the anxiety, both for officers and men. The rocky shore, it is true, appeared only a few fathoms distant, yet apparently it was impossible that even the hardiest and most skilful swimmer could breast the raging billows that foamed and roared between ; while the horror of the spectacle was increased by the crashing of the masts, the strain of the vessel upon the rocks, and the floods of water which incessantly swept over the torn and battered decks.

Meantime, the crew preserved the most heroic composure ; and though aware that all must perish unless a communication could be formed and maintained with the shore, not one man amongst them showed the slightest sign of fear. Several volunteered to make the hazardous attempt of swimming to the shore ; and at length one named Lennard, who was known to be a skilful and stalwart swimmer, was selected.

With the end of a lead-line in his mouth, he was lowered into the seething surf ; but the current setting full against him to the northward, all his strenuous exertions proved unavailing, and with difficulty he was dragged on board again.

Lennard's failure, however, did not discourage his comrades, but, on the contrary, incited them to renewed effort. A consultation was held as to the next steps to be taken. The only hope that remained was in the dingey (the jolly-boat having been washed away), when Turner, the boatswain, as brave a fellow as ever breathed, volunteered to make the attempt. He secured a rope round his body, and was then lowered into the boat. The tackling was let go, the men

gave a cheer, and the boat, with its occupant, was borne away by the current.

The reader may imagine with what anxiety the officers and crew of the *Drake* watched the movements of the intrepid boatswain, whom the boat hurried to within a few feet of the shore. There it hovered for a moment on the crest of a huge wave; the next moment it was dashed to fragments upon the rocks. But Turner retained his presence of mind, kept hold of the rope while struggling among the waters, and succeeded in scrambling up the cliff.

While he was engaged in this perilous enterprise, the sea was making heavy breaches over the ship. The crew clung by the ropes on the forecastle; each succeeding wave menaced them all with destruction; while, at each roll of the vessel, one of the sufferers records that the ship's bell tolled *one*; the funeral knell of many—and as they fully expected then, of all, except the boatswain, who, though sorely bruised, stood on the shore in apparent safety. For upwards of an hour the brig beat about with great violence, until a tremendous billow carried her quarter clean over the rock where she had first struck, and close to a ridge rising full above the waves. This seemed to offer at least a temporary refuge from the present danger. The forecastle, which up to this time had been the only sheltered part of the ship, was now abandoned for the poop; and as no chance of saving her remained, Captain Baker determined to remove his men.

Calling them around him, he announced his intention, and indicated the best means by which they might reach the rock. Now, for the first time, they proved insubordinate; not a man would quit the wreck until they had seen their captain safe. This simultaneous outburst of feeling, as a writer justly remarks, did honour alike to the commander and his followers: to the former, by showing how completely

he had gained the affection and respect of his people ; to the latter, by proving that they could appreciate the merits of a good officer.

"Never," says Mr. Gilly, in his animated narrative, "never was good discipline displayed in a more conspicuous manner. No argument or entreaty could prevail on Captain Baker to change his resolution. He again directed the men to quit the vessel, observing that his life was the least and last consideration. The men, upon hearing this reiterated command, took measures to leave the wreck ; but this could not be done without much risk and danger, for at each successive sea the wreck surged upon the rock, and then again, as the waves receded, fell back. It was therefore necessary to spring from the wreck the moment she was close to the rock, and, unhappily, a few of the men perished in the attempt ; amongst these was Lieutenant Stanley, who, being benumbed with cold, was unable to get a firm footing, and was swept away by the current. His companions, with every inclination, had not the power to save him ; he struggled for a few moments, was dashed with irresistible force against the rocks, and the receding wave engulfed its victim.

"When he had seen every man clear of the wreck, then, and not till then, did Captain Baker join his crew."

It was now discovered that they stood collected on an isolated rock, separated from the mainland by a channel of no great width, and rising a few feet above the sea. But it was also discovered that at high water their place of refuge would be washed by the waves ! So that, apparently, they had made their escape from one fearful catastrophe only to perish by a slower and more cruel fate. Oh, it was terrible to see the hungry waters rising inch by inch around them,—slowly, stealthily, surely,—now appearing to sink a little, but

immediately swelling higher than before,—and to know that they would ere long close over them for ever, unless Providence should bid the tide be stayed, and hush the stormy winds into silence ! To face the gradual approach of death in such a shape, is to undergo, perhaps, the severest trial to which human fortitude can be exposed. It is not like dying in the rush and tumult of the battle, when the blood is fierce and the heart on fire, and death is better than defeat, or else comes to the warrior in the guise of victory. The craven can muster courage to hold his place in the serried ranks or the charging squadrons ; but surely a man must needs have something of the heroic in him, who can watch the steady upward movement of the destroying waters with an eye that never shrinks. We will not say that the men of the *Drake*, as they stood upon their sea-girt rock, were insensible to the awful character of their peril ; but assuredly not a cheek blanched, not a lip quivered. They were English seamen, prepared to do their duty ; and, so far as they could see, their duty was to die.

But not to die without an effort after safety. The boat-swain, who had never let go his rope, now crawled to the edge of the cliff at the point nearest to the wave-washed rock, and, watching his opportunity, flung it across to his companions. Happily, it was long enough to reach the rock, though only long enough to allow of one man holding it on the shore, and another on the rock, *at arm's length*. This means of deliverance was precarious, but it was gladly welcomed ; for the tide had advanced rapidly, and the minutes still intervening between life and death might easily be counted.

No one, however, prepared to avail himself of this means, until Captain Baker's precedence was recognized. But all the entreaties of his officers and crew could not move the

gallant commander to quit the rock "until every soul was safe." When it was found that the rock might as readily have been shaken as his heroic decision, one by one, in due order, the men slipped from the rock upon the trembling rope; and no fewer than fifty-four out of sixty actually succeeded in gaining the shore. Of the six who remained, one was a woman—wearied, worn, prostrate, almost lifeless. A brave fellow, when his turn came to leave the rock, resolved upon an effort to save her who, it was evident, could not save herself; took her up in his arms, grasped the rope, and began the perilous transit. Alas, and alas! when he had accomplished about half the distance, the rope, too weak to sustain the additional burden, gave way; and the seaman and the woman were swallowed up by the foaming waves beneath! At this crisis the men on shore distinctly heard the words, "Then all hope is gone!" And, in truth, such was the case; for with the broken rope was swept away the sole means of safety for Captain Baker and the few remaining with him on the rock.

The men on shore ceased not in their efforts to save the unfortunate castaways. They tied together their handkerchiefs and shirts to replace the lost rope; but their efforts were in vain—they could not obtain sufficient length to reach the rock. A party was despatched in quest of help. They found a farmhouse; and while they were searching for a rope, those who remained to watch the heroic captain and his three comrades saw the waters rising higher and yet higher. At one moment the sufferers were lost amid foam and spray; the bravest trembled, and shut his eyes on the awful scene. But some uncontrollable impulse forced him to gaze again: the wave had receded; and the sufferers in patient fortitude still waited on the rock. Then came another wave, and yet another; and at last—the rock was bare!

“ And is he dead, whose glorious mind
Lifts thine on high ?
To live in hearts we leave behind,
Is not to die.”

A monument to the memory of Captain Baker was erected, at the public expense, in the chapel of the Royal Dockyard at Portsmouth. His name, however, deserves to be better known among his countrymen ; for it is that of one of England's noblest sons, who as nobly trod the “ path of duty ” as Wellington himself, and whose death was not less glorious than that of Nelson.

XXII.

LOSS OF THE "KENT."

March 1825.



THE loss of the *Kent* is one of the most stirring incidents in the history of "perils by sea," and its narrative never fails, however frequently it may be repeated, to engage the reader's deepest interest.

She was a noble East Indiaman, of the old type, of 1300 tons, which left the Downs on the 19th of February 1825, having on board a crew (including officers) of 148 men, besides 20 private passengers, and 20 officers, 344 soldiers, 43 women, and 66 children, belonging to the 31st Regiment. Her destination was Bengal and China.

During her voyage down Channel, she had fair weather and made good progress, and losing sight of the English coast on the evening of the 23rd, entered the Bay of Biscay. On the 28th, when in latitude $47^{\circ} 30' N.$, and longitude $10^{\circ} W.$, she was met by a strong gale from the south-west; which gradually increased, until, on the morning of the first of March, she was compelled to lie to, under a triple-reefed main-top sail only. A part of her cargo consisting of shot and shell, the ship rolled heavily, and the articles of cabin furniture were dashed about with great violence, much to the alarm and inconvenience of the passengers.

Some anxiety being felt about the security of a cargo of such dangerous materials, an officer, with a couple of seamen, went below to examine into its stowage. They carried with them a light in a patent lantern, which was afterwards handed up to be trimmed. Finding that one of the spirit-casks had got adrift, the officer sent the two sailors for some billets of wood to secure it. Meantime the ship lurched suddenly ; the lantern dropped from the officer's hand ; and in his eagerness to recover it he stove in a plank of the cask, the spirits rushed out, communicated with the lantern, and in a moment all was aflame. The alarm was immediately given, and officers and men, hastening to their respective posts, used every resource that could be suggested to check the further spread of the conflagration. Water was poured into the hold from pumps and buckets, and wet sails let down, in the hope of extinguishing the flames. But fire, though so useful a servant, is a dangerous master—nay, a remorseless tyrant. It forced its irresistible way, and soon, vast columns of smoke rising from every hatchway, it was felt by the more experienced that no chance of saving the ship remained. Captain Cobb, however, was a man of resolution and promptitude, and he did not fail to adopt every expedient that might possibly prove useful. He ordered the lower decks to be scuttled, the combings of the hatches to be cut, and the lower ports to be opened to admit the waves. His commands were obeyed with such readiness, and the flood rushed in with such violence, that some of the sick soldiers, a woman, and several children, were drowned before they could reach the upper deck. And though the volumes of water thus admitted into the hold somewhat retarded the progress of the fire, they threatened the ship with a new danger,—that of foundering,—for she began to sink under the burden that pressed upon her.

It is painful to picture to one's-self the scene that now ensued. The ship's upper deck was crowded with between six and seven hundred human beings, nearly all of whom were mad with confusion, apprehension, and excitement. Some had hurried from their berths in a half-naked condition. Others, in a condition of panic-stricken insensibility, looked about them with a gaze which had no "speculation" in it. Others, again, in their wild frenzy shrieked aloud for the aid that could not be given. Some veteran soldiers and experienced mariners seated themselves with the calm resignation of men who, having done their best, were content to submit to the Divine will. While others sank on their knees and prayed, aloud or in silence, that God would stretch forth his hand to save, even in that last moment of apparently hopeless agony.

"For several hours" (we read in one of the narratives of this event) "the doomed ship's large company had nothing before them but death in two of its most fearful forms. The fire was raging in the hold, and was expected every moment to reach the powder-magazine; when one of the officers, Major M'Gregor, who afterwards wrote a narrative of the event, and who, like Cornelius, feared God no less truly than he honoured the king, remembered that if they all thus perished, with not one left to tell the tale, their relatives at home might linger in suspense for years as to their fate. He wrote in pencil, on a scrap of paper, a note to his father, telling of their situation, and of the hope which union to Christ alone could give to himself and the dear friends beside him in the awful hour of death. The note, addressed to 'John M'Gregor, Esq., Commercial Bank, Edinburgh,' was put into a bottle, and thrown into the sea, in the hope that it might one day reach its destination."

It is interesting to add that the officer who had written

the note,—afterwards Lieutenant-Colonel of the 93rd Highlanders, and at one time in command of the constabulary force in Ireland,—nearly two years after the burning of the *Kent*, received from a gentleman in Barbadoes *the very paper he had written* in his hour of peril. The bottle containing the note was picked up on the shore of Barbadoes, by a person when bathing, on the 30th September 1826.

The precious relic is stained with sea-water, but is still distinctly legible. As it cannot but interest our readers, we subjoin a facsimile of the pathetic words which were written in such strange and terrible circumstances.

The ship the *Kent*
Indiaman is on
fire — Elizabeth
Joanna & myself
commit our spirits
into the hands of our
blessed Redeemer
his grace enables
us to be quite
composed in the awful
prospect of entering
eternity
14 March 1825 — J. M. Gregor
Bay of Biscay

Their prayers were heard.

At this moment, Mr. Thompson, the fourth mate, sent a

sailor to the fore-top, to look out for a sail. After a brief but anxious survey of the horizon, he exclaimed, "A sail on the lee-bow!" a cry which infused new hope into every heart, and drew three hearty cheers from the crowded deck. Up flew the flags of distress; and minute-guns pealed loudly across the waves. In a few minutes the stranger ship responded by hoisting British colours, and crowding on all sail, she bore down to their relief. She proved to be the brig *Cambria*, Captain Cook, bound to Vera Cruz.

Captain Cobb, Colonel Fearon, the officer in command of the troops, and Major M'Gregor, now consulted on the needful arrangements for getting out the boats; and it was resolved that the officers should move off "in funeral order;" that is, the youngest first. The colonel at the same time gave command that any man who should dare to enter the boats before the women and children had quitted the vessel, should be cut down; but the utmost discipline and order prevailed, and no such attempt was made.

The cutter being ready, all the ladies, and as many of the soldiers' wives as it could safely carry, were placed within it; and though there seemed little probability of its living in such a heavy sea, after a few moments of difficulty it got clear of the ship, and safely struggled through the rolling billows until it reached the *Cambria*. There was extreme difficulty, however, in getting the women and children on board the brig, the cutter being in imminent danger of dashing against her broadside. At length the children were safely embarked, and then the women,—not a single accident occurring in their perilous transit from the *Kent* to the *Cambria*.

The crew and passengers of the *Kent*, who, breathlessly watching the progress of the cutter, had for a while forgotten the volcano of shot and shell slumbering beneath their feet, now again began to take active measures for their safety.

After their first trip, the boats from the *Cambria* could not come alongside, for fear of being dashed to pieces. Therefore the women and children were fastened in couples, and lowered by ropes from the ship's stern. Many were plunged again and again under the rising billows; and though none of the women perished, many of the poor young children were unable to endure this painful process. Some of the soldiers, hoping to save their dear ones, leaped with them into the sea, and swam for the boats, but their strength gave way before they could reach them. One person, we are told, having to decide between his wife and children, saved the former, and left four children to perish. Another, a soldier, who had neither wife nor children, had three of the children lashed to his back, and plunging into the sea, struck out for the nearest boat; the violence of the waves baffled him, and when he was drawn back to the ship, it was found that two of the unfortunates were dead.

Three out of the six boats were swamped, and several men were drowned; one or two, it was thought, through the weight of the plunder they had accumulated, others in their attempt to reach the *Cambria*; one fell down the hatchway into the flames, and a second was crushed to death between the boat and the vessel's side.

As an explosion might take place at any moment, the *Cambria* was obliged to lie to at some distance from the *Kent*, and the boats, in going and returning, occupied three-quarters of an hour; a terrible interval of suspense to those on board the burning vessel. As the conflagration increased with fearful rapidity, and the danger of an explosion became more and more imminent, the captain felt the necessity of hastening his final preparations. A rope was extended from the extremity of the spanker-boom, along which the men were recommended to creep, and thence slide down the cable hang-



BURNING OF THE "KENT."

ing from it into the boats. This was, indeed, a fearful risk ; for the swelling sea heaved the boats to and fro, and those who sought to reach them were now swung in the air, now plunged into the water, and now dashed against the boats in such a manner as to scare the most resolute veteran. Rafts and hen-coops were also got ready, in case it should be necessary for all to take suddenly to the water.

The number of those on board was now greatly reduced ; but night was gathering in, and the captain of the *Kent* was urgent that not a moment should be lost. Already the wreck was twelve feet below the water-mark, and the boat now approaching for the last time seemed capable of containing all who were in a condition to take advantage of this final chance of safety. Accordingly, the three remaining officers of the 31st prepared to depart. Captain Cobb, determined to be the last to quit the wreck, refused to enter the boat until he had made another effort to rouse from their torpor the few around him whom terror had completely paralyzed. But he had little time for hesitation. Already the guns, whose tackles had been burst asunder by the flames, successively exploded in the hold into which they had fallen. Finding his exertions useless, he bethought himself of his own safety, crawled along the boom-mainyard, and lowered himself into the crowded boat.

It is unnecessary to say that a very warm reception was accorded to the sufferers on board the *Cambria*. Secure upon its decks, they watched with vivid sympathy the fate of the goodly vessel from which they had happily escaped. The long coils of flame soon wound about the upper deck and poop, shot aloft in wreathing spirals to the tops of the masts and the rigging, forming one vast conflagration that brightened the face of heaven with a lurid red far as the eye could see ! The burning masts fell over the side. At last, about half-past

one in the morning, the fire reached the magazine, and with an appalling roar large portions of the wreck were hurled high into the air, to fall back in a chaos of blackened timbers on the seething surface of the sea. The spectacle was grand, overwhelming, sublime ; but its eye-witnesses regarded it with a painful sympathy, when they thought of their companions who had perished,—eighty-one in all, burned, drowned, suffocated, or otherwise deprived of life.

The following narrative describes the rescue of several sufferers who escaped from the explosion of the ill-fated *Kent*.

About twelve o'clock on the night of the 1st of March, a bright light was espied by the look-out of the *Caroline*, a brig homeward-bound from Alexandria, and, on careful examination, it appeared to proceed from a burning ship. As the weather had been squally on the preceding day, the *Caroline* was double-reefed with foretop-sails, main-try-sail, and foretopmast stay-sail, close upon the wind, with a heavy sea running. Captain Bibby, her commander, immediately gave orders to set the maintop-gallant-sail, and bore down to the spot.

About two o'clock, when every eye was attracted by the increasing brightness of the heavens, there arose a sudden jet of the most intense light, evidently caused by an explosion, though at too great a distance for the report to be audible. In half an hour they were near enough to distinguish the wreck of a large vessel, lying head to wind, of which nothing remained but the ribs and frame-timbers; and as these indicated the outlines of a double tier of ports and quarter galleries, they at once conjectured that the burning skeleton was that of either a first-class East Indiaman, or a line-of-battle ship. She had burned down nearly to the water's edge; but becoming lighter as her internal spars and timbers were consumed, she still floated, pitching about, and rolling and falling with

the long heavy swell of the bay. She is described as having presented "the appearance of an immense open caldron of basket-work, formed of the blackened ribs, naked and stripped of every plank, encircling a mass of flame, by no means of equal intensity, but concentrated in force at two or three points, probably where the hatchways had supplied an additional quantity of looser fuel. To leeward, the atmosphere was filled with clouds of smoke, and besprinkled with myriads of sparks and burning flakes of lighter materials, continually thrown up, and scattered by the wind over the sky and the waves."

Part of a mast, and some blackened spars, still rose and fell with the motion of the waves, almost grinding under the weather-quarter of the wreck.

In a few minutes the *Caroline* came down before the wind, and was brought as near the bows of the *Kent* as could be done with safety. At first no living being was visible; but the silence was suddenly broken by a shout, and several figures could be seen clinging to the mast and spars. As they were almost on a level with the water, they could have seen the *Caroline* only a short time before they hailed her; and it is impossible to conceive the greatness of their joy when a prospect of rescue broke upon them in their apparently hopeless condition, and within a few yards of the frail timbers that barely supported them they caught sight of the hull and sails of a large vessel.

Captain Bibby ordered the top-gallant-sail to be taken in, the foretop-mast stay-sail lowered, and the ship's course continued to leeward, until she was out of reach of the falling flakes and sparks. Then the *Caroline* hove to. In this position it was possible that if a boat or raft hung near the wreck, it might be steered toward the *Caroline*; for, in a sea rolling so heavily, it was not possible for a boat, a raft, or even a spar, if overloaded, to make way to windward. Mean-

while the jolly-boat was lowered, and being manned by the mate, Mr. Matthew Walker, and four seamen, pushed off gallantly to the wreck, though their course was dangerously obstructed by the masts, spars, chests, and packages, which were dashed to and fro by the billows, and threatened destruction to whatever object they encountered. "As they came within a few yards of the stern, they saw a man clinging under the ship's counter by a rope or piece of the wreck, so close, that as it rose with the water, he was jerked upwards, and suspended, to meet a more dreadful fate; for a stream of flame gushed through the casings of the gun-room ports, scorching him dreadfully, while the sinking of the wreck again plunged him downwards and buried him in the waves, as he cried and shrieked with the agony. Him they determined to save first, if possible; but just when within their grasp, the wretched being, whose cries had ceased, was plunged into the sea by the fire severing the rope or spar to which he hung. Their efforts were next directed to the men on the mast, from which six of the nearest were carried off, the size of the boat permitting no more; in prudence, indeed, so many should not have been taken, for on returning to the *Caroline* they were nearly swamped."

Six more were rescued in a second trip, and Mr. Walker then observed that, from the state of the wreck, it was not improbable the charred and shattered mass might founder before a third could be achieved; in which event the survivors on the mast would almost certainly be sucked into the vortex, and lost. In this third trip, therefore, every man plied his oar with a will; but before they drew near, the fiery hulk settled in the waves, and disappeared: to the glow of the flames succeeded a sudden darkness, and to the crackling of the timbers a sudden silence. Mr. Walker had the presence of mind to mark the point of disappearance by a

star, and rowing carefully around the troubled vortex, and fending off the drifting timbers, the men raised at intervals long and repeated shouts. At length a feeble cry was heard in response, and for an anxious hour they rested on their oars.

Day dawned; the mast again became visible in the very line which its bearing had taken; four forms could still be descried amongst the rigging and top-hamper; but they seemed motionless. On approaching them, it was found that two out of the four still showed signs of life; they stretched their arms towards their deliverers, who dragged them into the boat in a perfectly exhausted condition: the other two were dead.

XXIII.

WRECK OF THE "AVENTURE."

July 25, 1825.



IF the reader will examine a chart of the great Southern Ocean, he will perceive, situated between the 46th and 47th degrees of south latitude, and the 44th and 47th meridians of east longitude, a group of small islands or islets, having Kerguelen's Land on the east, and Prince Edward's Island on the west. They are generally known as the Marion and Crozet Archipelago,* because discovered, in 1772, by two French navigators so named; but very little information had been obtained as to their character and products when the schooner *Aventure* was wrecked there in 1825. To her commander, M. Lesquin, we are indebted for an exceedingly interesting account of his residence on the easternmost of the four isles which compose the group.

The *Aventure* sailed from the Mauritius on the 28th of May 1825 for these islands, having been chartered by Mr. Black, who wished to hunt the sea-elephants.† When loaded

* In English gazetteers, as the Crozet Islands. They are named, respectively, Penguin or Inaccessible, Pig, Possession, and East Island. Possession, the largest, is about twenty miles long by ten miles broad. East Island rises to a height of 4000 feet. The group was visited by Sir James Ross in 1839-43.

† *Macrorhinus proboscidea*.

with oil, she was to return to her native port, leaving on shore a supply of empty barrels, and a party of nine men, to prepare a second cargo.

The *Aventure* was a small bark of only 55 tons, with a motley crew of sixteen men, English, French, Spanish, Dutch, and Portuguese. As she was heavily laden with casks, and the voyage was not expected to occupy more than a month at the utmost, she carried but a limited allowance of fresh water, and provisions only for forty days. But it so fell out that the *Aventure* was beset by contrary winds; and her progress was considerably retarded by snow, and fog, and tempests. "The stars in their courses" seemed to fight against her. Hence, on the 20th of June, it was found necessary to reduce each man's ration of water to a bottle a day; and this was further reduced, on the 25th, to half a bottle. Nor did the weather become more favourable. On the 8th of July the schooner dropped anchor off the islands, but it was found impossible to effect a landing. "We remained on board," writes the captain, "spectators of the gloomy scene before our eyes. The island was covered with snow; the sky was black and threatening; the winds blew furiously. The ocean-birds, surprised to see a ship so near the shore, flew around us, screaming loud and hoarse."

For twenty days the storm continued. Each man's ration of fresh water was limited to one wine-glassful for twenty-four hours.

On the 25th, all the casks were dry!

Though the sea still rolled heavily, it was decided to send a boat ashore. Nine men embarked in her, and contrived to land all "safe and sound;" but the wind, which redoubled its fury during the night, prevented them from returning.

Towards midnight, the schooner's cables parted, and her

second and only remaining boat was washed away. She had on board only three able-bodied men; the others were on the sick-list. They manœuvred to haul towards one of the eastern islands; and on the following day, at evening, were close upon it. The crew, devoured by thirst, set to work to construct a raft, with the view of reaching the shore, and obtaining a supply of water; but when it was completed, they found themselves unable to steer it towards the island. Moreover, the gale blew up again with increased fury; the ship was dashed upon the reefs, and became a wreck, but near enough to the shore to enable the seven men on board of her to save themselves.

Among them, besides the captain, M. Lesquin, was Mr. Fotheringham, a young Englishman, sent to superintend the fishery. It was to the perseverance, courage, and intelligence of these two men that the castaways owed their safety. Not only did they show themselves the most active in all undertakings and the most resolute in every danger, but they sustained their companions by the force of their example and encouragement.

M. Lesquin, when he had seen that the loss of the vessel was inevitable, had provided himself with a flask of gunpowder, and a couple of gun-flints. By these means he was able to kindle a fire, which was kept up with the fat of a sea-elephant he and his companions had discovered and killed almost immediately on landing.

When they were thoroughly warm, they set to work to collect the fragments of the schooner, which the waves cast ashore. They secured some yards, and the main-top-mast, with their sails and cordage, some empty barrels, a bag of biscuit, a saw, a hatchet, an auger, and a hammer.

The biscuits had been wetted by the sea; but our castaways



WRECK OF THE "ADVENTURE."

soaked them in fresh water, and they served to appease the first pangs of hunger. Afterwards they constructed a rude kind of shelter with the sails, selected one of their number to keep watch and feed the fire, and attempted to sleep. Unfortunately, a whirlwind carried away their tent about midnight; and, amid the snow-drift, they waited impatiently for the dawn of day. When the sun reappeared, Fotheringham and Lesquin set out to survey the island on which they had been thrown.

They found themselves in a valley, bare of vegetation, and surrounded by hills equally bare. Over the whole scene spread the white deep snow, like a shroud. At last, after a close examination, they discovered a hollow in the rock, about three feet in height, in which five or six men might be able to take refuge. And there the castaways ensconced themselves, until they were able to build a hut with the

planks of the schooner. Meantime, they lived upon albatross and slices of sea-elephant's flesh.

On the following day, they began to collect stones for the walls of their proposed hut; but the work was frequently interrupted by bad weather; a fortnight elapsed before it was completed. The timbers saved from the wreck served for the roof, which was covered with the skins of sea-elephants.

The sea continued to throw up the waifs of the schooner; and thus the sailors were successively provided with knives, spears, tools, guns, a broken pot, and a mattress. In traversing the shore they found also a box containing a mathematical instrument and a small sum of money. The owner picked up the instrument, but thinking the money "useless dross," left it on the beach, and no one touched it.

When they had taken possession of the hut, Fotheringham and Lesquin resolved on an excursion into the interior of the island. The former had noticed, to the north-west, between two mountains, a gorge which probably led into another valley. They took this direction, and, after incredible fatigue, succeeded in penetrating into it.

The sea-elephants were more numerous there than in "Shipwreck Valley." As they continued their journey, they heard a variety of cries, the cause of which they discovered on descending to the shore. Thousands of a species of penguin, differing much from those on the other side of the island, were assembled on a rocky table-land, which was watered by a swift stream. The place they occupied was free from snow, but exhaled a strong and infectious odour. The young, still covered with down, were collected in the middle, and all around them were arranged the older birds. An avenue about two feet wide was left unoccupied, to allow of free access for the penguins returning from the sea to feed

their young. The most admirable harmony seemed to prevail among them; and all their efforts were confined, apparently, to the task of driving away a kind of pigeon which attempted to pilfer the food intended for the young penguins.

After collecting some eggs, and killing a few albatross, the two travellers quitted the valley they had discovered, to which they gave the name of the "Valley of Plenty," in order to rejoin their companions; but night overtook them on the way, and they lost the track. After walking for three hours in the deep snow, they were so overcome by the cold that they flung aside their booty in order to travel more quickly. They reached a glacier which seemed to them to extend with a gentle slope to the mountain-foot, and essayed to slide down its declivity; but it launched them over the brink of a precipice, and they fell fully fifty feet into a bed of snow, which happily saved their lives. M. Lesquin escaped with a broken finger, and Mr. Fotheringham with a pain in the loins, which lasted upwards of a year. They were unable to resume their journey until sunrise.

As they had been absent three days, their companions had given them up as dead. On their arrival they learned that the birds had devoured the small provision of sea-elephant's flesh which had been laid up, and that no more had been caught since their departure.

It was some days before they could retrieve this misfortune, owing to the snow and wind. Several times they sallied forth, but always unsuccessfully; the very birds had sought a refuge from the fury of the storm. Hunger had completely depressed their courage. The sea-elephant's fat, which they used as fuel, being exhausted, they were compelled to encroach on the store of wood, hitherto jealously

respected. The unfortunate seamen crouched around the fire, and would not leave it ; but their leaders resolved on a final effort, and when the weather improved, attempted to persuade them to repair to the Valley of Plenty. By dint of earnest persuasions, they secured the consent of some of them, and, not without difficulty, reached the shore which they had previously visited, killed a few sea-elephants, banqueted greedily upon their flesh, and then returned to the hut. The three seamen whom they had left behind were almost deprived of consciousness ; the flame of life was just faintly flickering and no more ; they were compelled, however, to partake of food, though several days elapsed before they recovered their strength.

This was the last time our shipwrecked company suffered from hunger. The arrival of sea-elephants in large numbers, and more thoughtful arrangements, prevented the recurrence of so severe a trial.

As we have already said, the Crozet Islands are remarkable for their barrenness.* In summer there may be perceived a sprinkling of moss and lichens over a soil composed of sand and stones ; and a few herbs grow here and there, which the castaways made use of to season their food. Hence their diet was necessarily limited to the amphibians and sea-birds which visited the spot, and the eggs they collected among the rocks. The skin of the sea-elephants and sea-wolves furnished the materials of their clothing, and they sewed them together with needles manufactured from the bones of the albatross.

The involuntary colonists of the island grew gradually accustomed to its climate ; their health was re-established ; and they agreed upon certain rules which provided for a fair division of their occupations.

* Possession Island has, however, some fertile patches ; and on Pig Island an immense number of swine find vegetable food. These swine are the progeny of some pigs left there by Captain Distance in 1834.

Unfortunately their good fellowship was often interrupted, and the differences of nationality led to misunderstandings and quarrels. On returning from an excursion into a valley which they had discovered to the east, Messrs. Lesquin and Fotheringham found one of the seamen almost dead from the effects of a sanguinary brawl. They then declared to those who had maltreated him that they should no longer live among them; and having raised another hut, they conveyed thither the wounded man, and thenceforth dwelt apart from their companions, to whom they ceased even to speak.

All went well in the new hut. M. Lesquin had discovered clay and turf; and succeeded in fabricating some earthen vessels which served as a kind of stove. Abundance rewarded their unwearied labours, and resignation softened the pangs of their isolated position. But one night, when they were sleeping soundly after a fatiguing excursion into the Valley of Plenty, they were suddenly aroused by an inburst of water, which crashed through the roof of their dwelling, toppled over the walls, and swept it clean from its foundation. It proved to be the result of a tidal wave which had overflowed a part of the valley.

Fotheringham and Lesquin had barely time to save themselves. In a few seconds the waters carried away all that they had collected and built up with so much labour. Those whose hut was further from the shore had suffered nothing by the sudden inroad; but on the following morning, perceiving no signs of the captain and superintendent's cabin, they hastened to the spot, and found them busily engaged in the erection of another habitation. Moved by their courageous perseverance, they begged their leaders to return with them, promising to be more obedient than in the past; and from that day, indeed, neither M. Lesquin nor Mr. Fotheringham had any reason to complain of their conduct.

This happy reconciliation seems to have quickened the imagination of the French captain. Remarking that thousands of albatross were hatched in the island, and on becoming strong flew off to sea, he remembered that these birds were accustomed to follow the whaling-ships, and swoop down on the harpooned whale as soon as it ceased to live; and that the seamen frequently amused themselves by firing at them or by catching them with a fish-hook. It occurred to him, therefore, that here was a means of making known their unfortunate condition. Accordingly, he made a hundred little bags of sea-wolf's skin, enclosed in each a paper indicating the position of the shipwrecked company of the *Aventure* and soliciting help, and fastened them to the neck of young albatross whom he surprised in their nests.*

This chance of safety, however, was too remote and too uncertain for the castaways to be contented with it. Therefore the captain proposed that they should build a boat, in which they might sally forth to meet any passing ship, or convey themselves to the nearest shore. For the framework they made use of the wreck of the ship; over it they fixed the staves of casks with stout rope-yarn; and they encased the whole in the skins of sea-elephants, which they also extended in such a manner as to form a deck. This strange ungainly craft measured sixteen feet in the keel, and six feet in the beam; it carried one mast, with a sail of sea-elephant's skin. There remained little to be done to complete it, when about eleven o'clock, on the 21st of December, Mr. Fotheringham raised a loud shout, and ran into the hut so pale that everybody thought some great misfortune had occurred. They surrounded and questioned him, but he could not speak: all he could do was to drag M. Lesquin outside, and point to the

* This circumstance may have suggested to Mr. Charles Reade an important incident in his romantic story of "Foul Play."

sea. A ship was plainly visible on the blue horizon, and was bearing down towards the island.

Mad with joy, the castaways hastened to kindle a huge fire. Unfortunately it was not perceived, and the ship changed her course.

On the following day she twice reappeared, and again bore away from the island. It is impossible to describe the alternations of hope and fear which shook the unfortunate seamen of the *Aventure*. At one moment they were raised to the heights of happiness; only to be plunged, the next, into the depths of despair.

The ship was several times seen by Lesquin and his companions in this painfully tantalizing manner, but they failed, apparently, in all their efforts to attract her attention.

But at length, on the 6th of January 1827, her crew discovered the fires carefully maintained by the anxious castaways, and sent a boat ashore to rescue them.

She proved to be a whaler, the *Cape Packet*, which had sailed from Prince Edward Island, had discovered the Crozet group, of which she had not even suspected the existence, and had delayed in their vicinity to pursue the sea-elephant. Captain Duncan received, with every mark of compassionate interest, the unfortunate crew of the *Aventure*, who, clothed in sea-wolves' skins, blackened by smoke, and disfigured by long beards and dishevelled hair, scarcely resembled human creatures. After eighteen months' wretched existence in these lonely sea-beaten islands, they regained once more the joys and comforts of civilization. As soon as he had completed his cargo, Captain Duncan sailed for the island on which had landed the nine men despatched for a supply of fresh water. Fortunately, these too were rescued; and the *Cape Packet* immediately set sail for the Cape of Good Hope, where she arrived on the 5th of March 1827.

XXIV.

WRECK OF THE "AMPHITRITE."

August 31, 1833.



THE ship *Amphitrite*, a "three-master" of considerable burden, commanded by Captain Hunter, was chartered by the Government to convey to Sydney, in New South Wales, a number of women and children who had been condemned to transportation.

She sailed from Woolwich on the 26th of August 1833. On the 29th she was overtaken by a violent storm, and on the 31st was wrecked on the French coast, in sight of the port of Boulogne. The unfortunate women on board perished, with most of the crew, owing to the fatal obstinacy of the captain, who, fearing they would effect their escape, opposed their disembarkation.

An eye-witness has left on record the following simple narrative of a very deplorable and painful catastrophe; all the more deplorable and painful because the waste of human life might, to a great extent, have been prevented.

"*Three P.M.*—The sea is rolling violently, and everything forebodes a terrible night; the fishing-boats have all returned to port, except one, No. 70, which, it is feared, is lost. A rumour is abroad that the London mail-steamer, which left

yesterday night, is also lost. The report, perhaps, is only premature, for there are many reasons to feel alarmed; but if she has been able to make Ramsgate, she will be saved.

“I am now going down to the shore, where signals are being made of a vessel in distress; she is a three-master, but carries no flag. With the telescope it is easy to see that she is endeavouring to make the open sea, but the winds beat her back towards the coast; if she runs aground she must perish.

“*Half-past Four.*—The foreseen event has happened; the vessel has just run aground opposite the Baths. The sea is more furious than ever, but the tide is on the ebb. With a glass, it is easy to make out the crew. Sailors on every side are hurrying to the beach; they are endeavouring to launch a boat. They hope to save the crew; but as for the ship, it is useless to give her a thought, for when the tide rises she will break to pieces.

“*Six o'clock.*—The boat is launched, but cannot get near the wreck. The owner of a fishing-boat, Hénin (his name ought not to be forgotten), declares that he will attempt to swim to the vessel; he throws off his clothes, and takes in one hand a rope; no one dares follow him; we see him struggling with the waves. What astonishes everybody is the inaction of the crew, who make no sign. They ask one another the reason: can the unfortunate men be exhausted? or does the captain hope to save the ship? I shall go down to the shore.

“*Eleven o'clock.*—What a horrible spectacle! As long as I live I shall never forget it! Thirty dead bodies are piled up in a heap in the boat-house of the Humane Society. All have perished; three sailors only are out of danger. What an awful night!

“About seven o'clock we saw the gallant Hénin reach the vessel. We perceived a sailor throw a rope to him; then the

rope is withdrawn; and Hénin, himself on the point of perishing, is compelled to let go, and make for the shore. He would fain make a fresh attempt, but is exhausted. All hope of saving these poor creatures must be abandoned: night gathers in, the sea is rising; and the roar of the winds and waves drowns their frenzied shrieks. How shall I describe to you the anxiety of the crowd who cover the beach? A great number of heroic seamen have put to sea in the hope of picking up some of the shipwrecked. The darkness increases; the winds increase in fury; the waves increase in force and violence; we can scarcely distinguish the boat. The billows compel the most intrepid to fall back. All at once a mast is cast at the feet of the spectators; then casks, then fragments of wreck, then dead bodies.

“We run in every direction with lanterns; we hasten to the shore; every moment we take up women, and children, and men—but all dead! A sailor rushes towards a rock, for he thinks he perceives some object in the shadow; it is an unfortunate seaman. He is carried to the establishment of the Humane Society. Two others are also rescued: one is found astride a plank which the waves have cast ashore; the other is picked up on the sand; both insensible, but alive. These are removed to the Hôtel de la Marine, where the most compassionate cares are lavished upon them by the proprietor, and especially by an English lady, Mrs. Austin, whose zeal and courage have been admirable. Another young Englishwoman, Mrs. Curtis, takes charge of a young woman who has been brought in quite naked, and placed upon a table: by dint of incessant friction, a little warmth is restored; but the case is hopeless, and the poor creature opens her eyes, and expires. Her dead body is removed, and Mrs. Curtis hastens to bestow her humane labours upon others. This unfortunate was of remarkable beauty.

WRECK OF THE "AMPHITRITE."



“In this terrible conjuncture, the seamen of the Custom-House and those of the Humane Society exhibit an indescribable activity. And as fast as the bodies are brought in, the medical men take charge of them, wrap them in warm coverlets, and bleed them. A woman makes a slight motion; a stream of dark blood flows from her arm, and she raises her eyelids; there is a moment of hope; but, alas, she dies! As this sad work of inspection goes on, the dead bodies are taken away, and deposited in a corner of the mortuary-room.

“The two sailors on whom Mrs. Austin has waited so compassionately have recovered their senses: from them we learn that the wrecked vessel is English, is named the *Amphitrite*, and is a transport-ship for criminals condemned to exile. She had on board one hundred and eight women, twelve children, and a crew of sixteen men. The men saved are named John Rice, John Owen, and James Towsey. Owen, the mate, is a fine man, in the prime of life; Rice and Towsey are young.

“*September 1st, Nine A.M.*—I was six hours at the Custom-House. During the night forty-three female bodies were recovered. With my own eyes I saw a young woman, clasping in her arms a child about two years of age, picked up in the harbour. Nearly all the bodies were stripped of their clothing. The shore is strewn with wreck; the carcass of the ship may be said to be ground to powder. I do not think the expression is exaggerated. Our unfortunate shipwrecked seamen are doing well. Now that they have rested, we have put some questions to Owen and Rice, and taken down the following depositions.

“I have also received that of the gallant Hénin; these are two important documents for the history of this awful disaster.

“We have opened a subscription for the relief of the shipwrecked, and to reward the brave seamen who exposed their

lives so freely. As for Hénin, the Government must reward his intrepidity; it is not the first time that he has done himself honour by similar actions."

DEPOSITION OF HENIN, OWNER OF A FRENCH FISHING-BOAT.

Hénin declares that about a quarter to six he informed the captain of the port that he wished to repair on board the wrecked vessel, and that the sailors had only to follow him; that, so far as he was concerned, he was resolved to go alone; that he ran down to the shore with a rope, threw off his clothes, and leaped into the sea. He thinks he was swimming for about a quarter of an hour, and that he drew near the English ship about seven o'clock; then he hailed the ship, and shouted in English, 'Throw me a rope to carry you ashore, or you are lost, for the tide is rising.' The crew heard him; he was on the starboard side of the vessel, which he even touched; he saw a sailor, and cried to him to tell his captain to throw the ropes. The sailors flung him a couple; one from the bow, the other from the stern. He could catch hold only of that from the bow, and holding it, was swimming for the shore, when it proved to be too short, and failed him. Then he returned to the ship, clung to it, and shouted to the crew to haul him on board; but his strength began to fail him. He felt exhausted, and it was with great difficulty that he regained the shore.

DEPOSITION OF JOHN OWEN, MATE OF THE "AMPHITRITE."

John Owen, born at Crawford, in the county of Kent, deposes that he was mate on board the *Amphitrite*, Captain Hunter, bound for Sydney.

The *Amphitrite* sailed from Woolwich on Sunday, the 26th of August; the gale began in the night of the 29th, when the ship was in sight of Dungeness; on the 31st, she was three

miles east of Boulogne Harbour. The captain used every exertion to keep off the land, but in vain. About four o'clock in the afternoon, the ship, borne onward by the violence of the wind, took the ground. The captain gave orders to cast anchor, in the hope that when the tide rose the vessel would float. About five o'clock, a French boat came to their assistance; but neither Owen, Rice, nor any of the crew were informed of this. They were busy at the time between decks making up their bundles, hoping to be able to land. Owen thinks that at that time everybody on board might have been saved. Before the arrival of the boat, he saw a man on the shore who, with his hat, made signs that they should land. Afterwards he perceived a man swimming alongside the stern, who cried to him in English to throw a rope; which he was on the point of doing, but was prevented by the captain.

After the boat had left them, the captain sent for Owen, and ordered him to lower the long-boat. But afterwards he changed his mind, and declared that no boat should go ashore. The prisoners who were upon deck besought and implored him for a boat; and three women told Owen that they had heard the surgeon advise the captain not to accept assistance from the French fishing-smack.

Towards seven the tide began to flow, and the crew, seeing that there was no longer any hope of safety, mounted upon the yards, while the women remained upon deck. This "situation" lasted for upwards of an hour and a half. All at once the vessel split in two, and the women were swept away by the waves. Owen, the captain, four sailors, and a woman were then on the yards; and in this position Owen remained, he thinks, for about three-quarters of an hour. Perceiving that masts, yards, and sails were all on the point of yielding to the violence of the wind and sea, he told his companions it was useless to remain there any longer, that they were about

to perish, but that he should make an effort to swim to the land. He then sprang into the sea, and thinks he swam nearly an hour before he reached the shore, where he was picked up by a Frenchman, and removed in a state of unconsciousness to the Hôtel de la Marine. Owen adds that he was perfectly well aware of the vessel's danger from the moment she struck; but that neither he nor his comrades were willing to appear afraid.

DEPOSITION OF JOHN RICE.

John Rice deposed that he was a native of London. He confirmed the deposition of Owen, and added that he had pointed out to the captain the person who, from the shore, had signed to them to disembark; but the captain turned his back upon him.

In reply to a question put to him, he declared that the captain was not intoxicated, and that he was part-owner of the ship. Owen and Rice both asserted that all the women were locked up in their cabin, but that, at the moment of danger, they forced the doors and rushed upon deck. There were already six feet of water in the hold.

The foregoing narratives have been drawn from a French source, which will account for some obvious gaps in the information they profess to supply. The captain's conduct is simply inexplicable, as measures could easily have been taken, in concert with the authorities of Boulogne, to prevent the escape of the prisoners. Nor is it explained how it happened that all the bodies washed ashore should have been naked. There are other peculiarities which the reader will not fail to observe; but we have endeavoured in vain to meet with any English report of the wreck which would supply the materials of a more comprehensive and connected account.

XXV.

LOSS OF THE "EARL OF ELDON."

September 1834.



THE *Earl of Eldon* was an East Indiaman of six hundred tons burden, well found and well built, and commanded by Captain Theaker, an able and experienced officer. On her passage home from Bombay she was destroyed by fire, September 27, 1834, under the following circumstances, which were put on record by one of the passengers.

The *Earl of Eldon* left Bombay on the 24th of August. She was loaded with a heavy cargo of cotton; and as she carried but few passengers, the space between decks was choked up with cotton bales, screwed as compact and tight as possible, so as to make it more difficult to take them out than put them in. Unfortunately the cotton had been brought on board damp, during heavy rain, and had been dried in the warehouse before being screwed. As this operation is performed by a very powerful compression, it is not improbable that fire-damp may sometimes be generated in the same way as in a hay-rick when it has been stacked damp. The number of persons on board was forty-five, including three ladies and an infant, and the captain and his crew.

On the 26th of September the good ship had got into the track of the trade-winds, and there was every reason to expect an auspicious voyage to the Cape. On the 27th, two of the passengers being on deck, they perceived a cloud of steam apparently rising from the fore-hatchway, and called the captain's attention to it. He said it was steam certainly, and that it was a common occurrence on board cotton-loaded ships when the hatchways were opened.

"I said nothing," remarks one of the passengers : " but the smoke growing denser, and assuming a different colour, I thought all was not right ; and also that the captain had some idea of this kind, as the carpenter was cutting holes in the deck, just above the place whence the smoke appeared to come. I went down to dress ; and about half-past six the captain knocked at my door, and told me that part of the cotton was on fire, and that he wished to see all the gentlemen passengers on deck. We assembled, and he stated the case to be this—that some part of the cargo had been spontaneously ignited, and that he wished to remove part of the bales till he could come to the ignited ones, and throw them overboard. We, of course, left everything to his judgment."

The captain now ordered the hands to breakfast as quick as possible, and set to work to discover the source of the fire. This having been done, he assured the passengers that the danger was not immediate, and that he hoped to avert it altogether. But about eight o'clock the smoke became much denser, and rolled in gathering volumes through the after-hatchway, the draught being admitted forward to allow the men to work. Several bales were removed ; but the heat below grew perfectly intolerable. The smoke was poured out in suffocating clouds, that wrapped the ship in gloom. Before nine, part of the deck had caught fire, and the men were compelled to rest from their ineffective labours. The hatches

were battened down to keep the fire from bursting out ; the boats were lowered, and supplied with provisions ; and about half-past one, three ladies, two sick passengers, an infant, and a female servant, were embarked in the long-boat, with two hundred and sixteen gallons of water, twenty gallons of brandy, a month's store of provisions, and a quantity of preserved meats and other comestibles.

It was now two o'clock. The hatches were opened, and all hands endeavoured to extinguish the fire. The main-hatchway being raised, and a tarpaulin removed, there was a sail underneath, which was so hot that the men could scarcely lift it. When they did, the heat and smoke came up worse than ever. The fire being found to rage underneath that part, the captain ordered the bales to be hoisted out till they could reach those that were burning ; but they were found to be smouldering underneath, and in every effort to remove them they came away in handfuls.

It proved absolutely impossible to endure the puffs of flame and smoke, and jets of hot vapour, that rose incessantly from the incandescent mass. Water seemed only to increase them, in the small quantities the men durst use ; for had the captain ventured to pump it into the ship to extinguish the fire, the bales would have swollen to such an extent as to burst up her deck, and their greatly increased weight would have certainly sunk her. In either case the result would have been destruction.

Recognizing, though reluctantly, that human efforts were powerless, the captain called all hands together upon the poop, and asked whether any could suggest some other expedient with a view to extinguish the fire and save the ship ; adding, " We will stick by her as long as a hope remains." But it was the common opinion that nothing more could be effected : the crew were sober and steady, and had done their

best. The heat increased so much that it became dangerous to leave the poop. The captain requested the passengers to get into the boats, and afterwards told off and embarked his men, he himself leaving the ship at three o'clock, just as a volley of flame burst through the quarter-deck. They then put off, the two smaller boats towing the long-boat; the



BURNING OF THE "EARL OF ELDON."

ship's way having been previously stopped by backing her yards. When they had rowed about a mile, they paused to gaze at the magnificent spectacle she presented; the flames clearly marking out, as with a blood-red tracery, the outlines of her masts and yards. These soon fell in; the hull burned down to the very surface of the water; then came a bright

flash, followed by a dull, heavy explosion. The powder had caught ; charred timbers and burning fragments hurtled through the air, and fell back into the waves with an angry, hissing sound. Then all was over.

The prospect before the fugitives was now a painful one. In the long-boat, which measured twenty-three feet long by seven and a half feet broad, were crowded the captain and twenty-five others, with an infant four months old. The two other boats held ten persons each, including the officer in charge : one of these carried a few bags of biscuit, but the principal store of provisions was in the long-boat. We were distant a thousand miles from Rodriguez, and four hundred and fifty from Diego Garcias, the largest of the Chagos Islands ; but before we could reach the latter, we must brave a sea vexed by alternate gales and calms, and not less stormy than the latitudes we had left.

About eleven o'clock we rigged the boats and hoisted sail. In the long-boat we carried a lantern lashed to the mast, as a signal to the others during the darkness of night ; and at daybreak they were despatched in different directions on the look-out for ships. While the wind was light they easily outsailed us ; but when it blew strong, and the sea rolled, the difference of speed was necessarily in our favour, from the superior size and capabilities of the long-boat. On the third day came a change of moon, and with it an appearance of foul weather ; but as we were in the "trades," we had no cause to fear contrary winds. During the night there was much wind and rain. We had no shelter of any kind, and the spray of the sea thoroughly drenched us, and spoiled a considerable portion of our biscuit ; though this, very fortunately for our peace of mind, we did not discover until we were no longer in need of it. The misery of our situation was extreme ; but we did what we could to lighten it. The

ladies were placed in the stern of the boat, the officers and men in the body of it. For my part, I slept nearly every night on the top of a water-puncheon.

In the course of the following day the weather grew worse, and one of the small boats, which carried Mr. Simpson, the mate, and nine men, was torn and battered by the sea. She came alongside, and the carpenter was put on board: he repaired her as well as he was able, but with little hope that she would last long. We then fastened a piece of canvas along our weather gunwale, having lashed a bamboo four feet up the mast, and fixed it on the intersection of two stanchions at the same height above the stern. The cloth was firmly lashed along this erection, so as to form a kind of sloping roof. But for this imperfect defence we must have been swamped; and we still shipped such heavy seas that four men were constantly employed in bailing. In the evening the gale was furious, and the sea rolled in heavy billows; and not thinking the damaged boat safe, we took on board her crew, and abandoned her. We were now thirty-six passengers, stowed as thick as we could hold, and our boat did not rise more than eight clear inches out of the water.

That wretched night I shall never forget: a single wave might have overwhelmed us. The memories of my past life crowded on my mind. I felt parted from this world, yet could not divest myself of a certain feeling that we should be saved. I recommended myself to Him without whose permission the waters had no power to harm us, and then awaited death with resignation. But when I thought of the short struggle that might hurry us into eternity, I lost my calmness. My heart beat with regret as I dwelt upon what those would suffer who were joyously yearning to greet me after long years.

Wet, bruised, weary, miserable as we were, the night passed

away—as sooner or later *all* this life's gloom must pass—and morning dawned. The weather was still very bad ; but the first gleams of light revived me, and I felt I could hope again. A tremendous billow now swept down upon us. I held my breath with horror. It broke right over our stern, immersed the poor ladies to their necks, and carried away the steersman's hat. The captain shouted cheerily—"That's nothing ; it's all right. Bail away, my boys !" He afterwards told us that he had not expected we should live out *that* night,—such a night of terror as it is given to very few to experience. Fatigued as he was in mind and body, the gallant soul would not suffer us to despair. He stood on the bench throughout the night. For nearly forty-eight hours he never slept. Day came ; and as, after the change of moon, the weather somewhat moderated, we enjoyed a comparative degree of comfort. The captain served out to us daily three small rations of biscuit and jam, and three half-pints of water, with a little brandy. The men were allowed a gill of spirits *per diem*. We had a large quantity of cigars, and, whenever we could strike a light, relieved and refreshed ourselves by smoking. The ladies were in a far more wretched condition than ourselves ; for they could not move, and any little alteration in their dress could not be made unless we drew a curtain in front of them. But they never gave utterance to a repining word.

On the thirteenth evening we began to look out for Rodriguez Island ; the captain warning us against over-excited imaginations, as, after the rough treatment it had undergone, his chronometer was not to be trusted. Night gathered over the waste of waters. I fell asleep, but about twelve o'clock was aroused by a cry of "Land ahead !" I looked, and through the mist could plainly see it looming. The boat was brought to for an hour. Then we made sail and ran towards it, and

about half-past two its outlines rose upon us boldly and clearly. We then lay to till daylight. I attempted to compose myself to sleep, but my feelings were too strong ; and to soothe myself, I lighted a cigar.

With the first glimmer of dawn Rodriguez* appeared six miles ahead ; and by eight o'clock all of us were landed safely. We received from the authorities a hearty welcome ; and in the enjoyment of comforts to which we had been long unused, we almost forgot the sufferings we had endured and the perils we had escaped.

* Rodriguez lies to the E.N.E. of Mauritius, in lat. $19^{\circ} 30'$ S., and long. $63^{\circ} 50'$ E. It is about twelve miles long, and from three to six miles broad ; very fertile, well watered, and well wooded.

XXVI.

LOSS OF THE "FORFARSHIRE."

September 1838.

"The maiden gentle, yet at duty's call
Firm and unflinching as the lighthouse reared
On the island rock, her lonely dwelling-place ;
Or, like the invincible rock itself, that braves,
Age after age, the hostile elements,
As when it guarded holy Cuthbert's cell."

WORDSWORTH.



BAMBOROUGH is a clean and pleasant village on the Northumbrian coast. It has a green surrounded by trees ; the noise of rooks is heard about the place ; flowers wind and creep over and around the cottage windows ; and the roads and paths are neatly kept. On the summit of a sea-washed promontory stands the gray Norman keep of its ancient castle, which was founded by King Ida in the sixth century, and captured by William Rufus in 1095. An agreeable sojourn is Bamborough for a month in summer—for the surrounding scenes are attractive to the poetical as well as to the artistic mind ; the castle-hill and terraces command a noble prospect of dark-green sea ; and the beach is broad, smooth, and sandy.

The village churchyard is specially interesting.

Among its graves is the last resting-place of GRACE DARLING. It lies at a short distance from the monumental tomb

erected to her memory in 1846. On this she is represented as recumbent at full length, her hands crossed, with an oar by her side held by the right arm, suggestive of the heroic exploit which made her—a lighthouse keeper's daughter—famous throughout the land.*

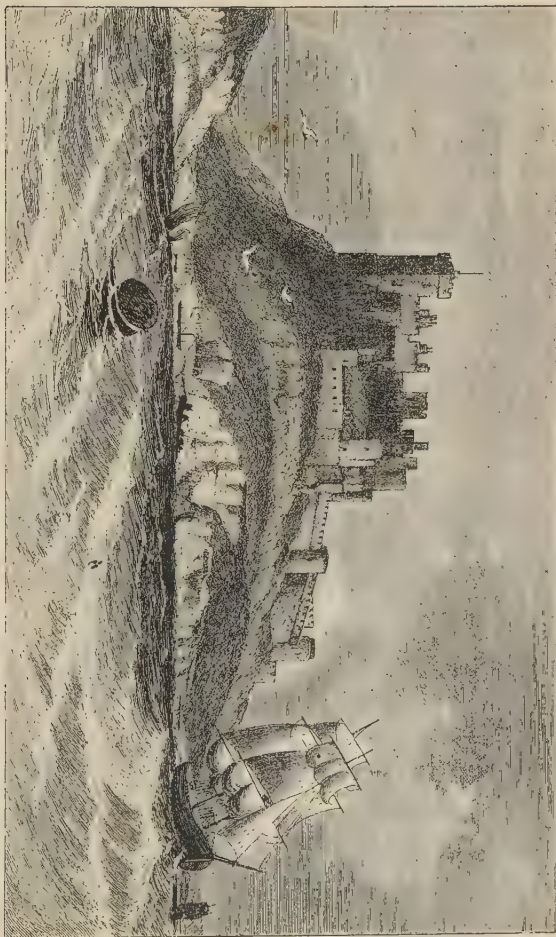
Now, why have I taken the reader to Bamborough and its quiet churchyard? The following narrative will show.

The *Forfarshire* steamer, of three hundred tons burden, was engaged in the trade between Hull and Dundee. She was commanded by Captain Humble; and on the 5th of September 1838 she sailed from Hull at half-past six in the evening, at the same time as the *Pegasus* and the *Innisfail*, both of which were bound for Leith. Her cargo consisted of sheet-iron and bale goods, and she carried twenty-two cabin and nineteen steerage passengers, besides the captain and his wife, ten seamen, four firemen, two engineers, two coal-trimmers, and two stewards: in all, sixty-three.

Before the *Forfarshire* left Hull her boilers had been carefully overhauled, and a small leak in one of them had been closed up. When she was off Flamborough Head, however, the leakage reappeared, though, by the action of the pumps, she was kept dry for the next half-dozen hours. Two of the fires were put out by the water, but after the boilers had been partially repaired, it was found practicable to relight them.

Thus the *Forfarshire* went on her course, partly disabled and unfit altogether to brave any violent storm, but still in sufficient trim for any ordinary voyage. About six o'clock on Thursday evening she passed between the Farne Islands and the Northumberland coast, and two hours later she entered Berwick Bay, the wind blowing violently from the north-east, and the sea rolling in foamy billows, while the

* "Northumberland and the Border," by Walter White, pp. 247, 248.



BAMBOROUGH CASTLE.

leak gained so much that the engine-fires were all extinguished. At ten o'clock she was off St. Abb's Head, the storm raging with undiminished fury. As the engines were quite useless, the sails were hoisted with the view of getting the vessel off the land; but the wind was too powerful; the ship ceased to answer her helm, and was driven southwards by the sweep of the tide, while the pitiless rain and dense fog prevented the actual position of the vessel from being made out by her officers. Too soon, however, breakers were seen close to leeward, and the fatal lights of the Farne Islands became visible, revealing the perils which beset the *Forfarshire*.

A portion of the crew, selfishly thinking only of their own safety, now lowered the larboard-quarter boat, and quitted the ship. Among them, shameful to say, was the first mate, James Duncan. By all the first shudder of the ship as she struck the rock was regarded as a signal of death. Even the master lost his self-possession; and his wife, who was also on board, sought with cries of agony and despair the protection he was unable to give. The screams of the females on deck mingled with the roar and clang of ocean and the harsh voices of the wild-fowl disturbed from their resting-places; while the men, clinging to various parts of the vessel, silently awaited the fate they could not hope to avoid. Most of the cabin passengers were below, and many of them asleep in their berths. Of these only one escaped, Mr. Ruthven Ritchie, of Hill of Ruthven, Perthshire. On being aroused by the steward, he immediately sprang from his berth, and seizing his trousers, rushed upon deck; observing the sailors leaping into the boat, he, with an extraordinary effort, and by means of a rope, swung himself into it, and was thus miraculously preserved. The uncle and aunt of this gentleman made a desperate effort to get into the boat as it was leaving the wreck, but in the endeavour fell into the sea, and per-

ished in their nephew's sight. He had nothing to defend him from the cold all the time he was in the boat but a shirt and a pair of trousers ; and his employment was to bail out the water with a pair of shoes.

The escape of the boat was remarkable. There was but one outlet through which it could make its way into smooth water without being dashed by the breakers against the island, and that outlet was happily taken by the boat. After being exposed to the cold all night, the crew were picked up about eight o'clock on Saturday morning by a Montrose boat, and carried into Shields. Mr. Ritchie had happily some sovereigns in the pockets of his trousers, and these enabled him to procure clothes soon after being landed. The following is a list of the crew and passengers brought into Shields :—John Matson, second mate ; James Hill ; Alexander Murray ; Robert Fox ; Allan Stewart, engineer ; James Hall, coal-trimmer ; David Grant ; Ruthven Ritchie, farmer ; and James Duncan, first mate. Mr. Ritchie proceeded to Bam-borough to inquire into the fate of his fellow-passengers, and thence he went to Edinburgh, on his way home to communicate the melancholy intelligence to his friends. The mate and others of the crew reached Dundee on the following Tuesday.

The vessel struck aft the paddle-boxes, and not above three minutes after the few survivors had rushed upon deck a second shock broke her up into two parts ; the stern, quarter-deck, and cabin being instantly carried away, with all upon them, through a tremendous current called the Piper Gut, which even in calm weather is dangerous, as it swirls and sweeps between the islands at the rate of six miles an hour. In stormy weather the rush is consequently terrific. The fore part of the vessel remained fixed on the rock, and the captain clung to it until washed overboard, with his wife clasped in his arms. Both were drowned.

Dangerous in the extreme was the position of the few passengers who remained on the fore part of the vessel. Placed on a small rock, which the sea surrounded with boiling waters, they clung to life with desperate energy, yet felt that in a few moments their end must come. It seemed as if their cries for help were hushed in the roar of the billows; but happily they fell upon a human ear, were heard by a maiden of noble heart,—Grace Horsely Darling, who, with her father, Mr. W. Darling, took charge of the Longstone Lighthouse. Without hesitation she roused him from his sleep, and as soon as the first faint gleam of dawn arose on the eastern horizon, they launched the lighthouse boat and proceeded to the rescue of the sufferers. The tide ran with such violence, and the weather was so stormy, that any attempt to reach the wreck seemed as impracticable as it was dangerous; and the old man, who, like Nelson, had never known what fear was, recoiled from venturing forth in such a terrific gale. It was rushing, as he considered, upon certain death.

After watching the wreck for some time, they made out that living beings were still hanging to it; and the gallant maiden, with a courage which has immortalized her name, seized an oar, and entered the boat.

This was sufficient; her father followed, and the two pulled their frail skiff towards the wreck.

By a dangerous and almost desperate effort the lighthouse keeper landed on the rock, while his daughter, to prevent the cobble from being dashed to fragments, rapidly rowed it back among the swelling billows. At length the whole of the survivors, consisting of five of the crew and four of the deck passengers, were taken from the wreck, and safely conveyed to the lighthouse; where Grace Darling ministered to their wants with anxious care, and waited upon them vigilantly for three days and three nights.

"It is impossible," says a writer, "to speak in too high terms of this unparalleled act of humanity, bravery, and disinterestedness."

The entire number saved was eighteen, of whom thirteen belonged to the vessel, and five were passengers. The remainder perished.

"The wreck of the steamer"—to quote from a contemporary narrative—"was seen from North Sunderland in the morning, about six o'clock, when signals were hoisted and guns fired immediately; but men could not be found to go off in the lifeboat. After some delay, seven persons volunteered their services, and set out in a four-oared cobbie. The boat shipped several seas in the course of her perilous trip, and on their way they spoke a steam-vessel of London, going north, and requested the captain to proceed to the wreck, offering at the same time to pilot the vessel, as they could easily have done, to within a few yards of the lee of the rock, in seven fathoms water. The captain, however, declined, and the men in the cobbie, after much exertion, succeeded in reaching the wreck. They found three bodies, one of them dressed in black, apparently about forty years of age, who, from papers found on his person, was the Rev. John Robb, of Dunkeld, a much esteemed clergyman of the Church of Scotland, prematurely cut off, to the deep regret of many friends and of a sorrowing flock. The other two were brother and sister—the boy eleven and the girl eight years of age—the children of Mrs. Dawson, who was saved by the exertions of Mr. Darling and his daughter. They also took a quantity of copper, and some light articles which would soon have been washed away.

"The storm raged with unabated fury, and in attempting to return they were compelled to put in at the Longstone Lighthouse, which they reached with much difficulty. There

they were obliged to remain two days and two nights in a temporary building, the waves occasionally bursting in, and obliging them to seek shelter in the lighthouse-tower, which was occupied by Mrs. and Miss Darling, and the persons they had saved from the wreck.

“They made another attempt to reach North Sunderland on Sunday, but were obliged to run in at Beadnel, where they remained till the following day. They visited the wreck on Monday, and found the body of an Irishman, named John Gallehar, who had resided at Dundee.”

The *Forfarshire*, though comparatively a new vessel, became a complete wreck in about fifteen minutes after she had struck.

Mr. Walter White describes a visit to the Longstone Lighthouse, which is so inseparably associated with the name of Grace Darling; and his description, graphic and picturesque, will, we doubt not, interest our readers.

Grace Darling's sister, he says, a quiet-looking, middle-aged woman, of respectful manner, welcomed them to the lighthouse, and led the way up to the sitting-room. It had a comfortable look, and something more, with its collection of books, natural curiosities, engravings of the memorable rescue, and family portraits. Doubly precious must a library be in such a spot! Presently, old Darling, Grace's father, came up, and, apparently as a matter of course, showed them a copy of the letter which he wrote the day after the fatal wreck in September 1838, to inform the Secretary of the Trinity Board of the adventure which made his daughter's name illustrious among those of heroic women.

Mr. White afterwards went up to the lantern, and out upon the gallery, whence, as the tower is sixty-three feet in height, the view over the islands is ample and richly varied.

The old man pointed out the course which he and his daughter took on their way to the wreck ; and explained that his wife had helped to launch the boat, that Grace knew how to pull an oar, but that to pull half a mile or more through a furious sea was no easy task for a girl. He did not know how they should have got the boat back to the lighthouse against the tide, had not some of the men whom they saved been able to row.

“ My eye roved over the scene as we talked, looking down on the twenty-seven isles and islets as on a panorama. Here, nearly six miles from the shore, the isolation appears somewhat awful ; and we may think that the courage of the residents was tried in the storm some years ago, which brought in such tremendous waves, that they had to seek the upper chambers of the lighthouse. The Longstone, rising but four feet above high-water mark, is swept by every gale with fierce drifts of spray and foam ; hence its vegetation is of the scantiest, including but five kinds of plants, among which the sea mat-grass predominates. Far different from the present scene : for now children are at play on the rock ; the poultry look as if the weather were always fine to them ; clothes are hanging out to dry ; and two boys, who have just come in from fishing, are cleaning and washing their capture, throwing the refuse over the stern of their boat, and the young gulls hovering round, dart down with a shriek, and seize the dainty morsels sometimes before they touch the water.”

At length Mr. White took his farewell ; and stepping into his boat, was carried towards Holy Island, staying for a few minutes while passing the Harcars, to look at the place where the *Forfarshire* struck. The rocks are weedy and slippery, but he scrambled up to the edge of the gap into which the ill-fated vessel drifted, and where the after part

broke off and sank with most of the passengers. It is but a narrow gap,—too narrow, apparently, to take in a steamer; yet half of one of the ponderous working-beams still lies at the bottom, plainly to be seen, and too heavy to be worth removal when the wreck was cleared away.

XXVII.

WRECK OF "LA MARNE."

January 25, 1841.



THE differences of national character and national temperament, or, we may rather say, the radical differences of race, are never more forcibly and clearly illustrated than in great conjunctures and in the hour of peril and disaster. When flushed with victory, the soldiers of England resemble in most respects the soldiers of France; and the racial characteristics are chiefly exhibited in their conduct on a lost field. Had Wellington been defeated at Waterloo, would his troops have shown as absolute a demoralization as was shown by those of Napoleon?

Believing that, in like manner, the special qualities of English and foreign seamen are best shown under circumstances of severe trial, we have thought it useful as well as interesting to vary our pages with narratives of the loss of foreign vessels. We believe it is no national partiality which has led us to the conclusion that in such events the British mariner exhibits a marked superiority in *morale* over his foreign rival. Yet it is only just to admit that the French seaman sometimes displays a calmness, and an obedience to orders, of which even our own "sea-lions" might be proud.

The following account of the loss of the French corvette *La Marne* is adapted from the official report of her commander, M. Gatier.

Having arrived, on the 15th of January 1841, at Stora, in Algeria, where I was to disembark a considerable quantity of war *matériel*, the corvette was anchored, under the directions of the harbour-master, in the most convenient moorings, between two lines of merchant vessels, which generally occupy the most sheltered position.

Two cathead anchors, one with one hundred fathoms of cable and the other with eighty, were let go in water eleven and ten fathoms deep. The stay starboard anchor, feathered with a kedge anchor, was moored at the stern, so that the ship might swing upon it; while a couple of grapnels, fixed in the rocks bordering the shore, held us firmly by the starboard. As soon as we were securely anchored, we got down our top-gallant masts, and began the work of unloading.

On the 21st the sea grew very rough, and the weather "nasty." The barometer fell to 27.6 inches, and the wind came in violent gusts from north-east to north-north-east, north, and north-west. The sea continuing to swell, I ordered, as a precautionary measure, that the spare larboard anchor should be let go, and the chains paid out so as to work freely, and the cables slackened, as the surf seemed to strain them.

In the evening of the 21st, several trading-vessels solicited our assistance, and we despatched to them a supply of grapnels and kedge anchors: some of the crews, abandoning their ships, sought refuge on board the *Marne*. We struck our topmasts, and made everything snug. So far our anchors held admirably, in spite of the tremendous seas, which had already driven two ships on shore.

On the 22nd the larboard chain broke, but the cable and spare cable proved sufficient to hold us.

On the 23rd and 24th the weather appeared to improve. The sea subsided, and we hauled up the broken chain, carrying our grapnels to a brig which lay anchored in front of us. This was successfully effected during the night of the 24th. On the morning of the 25th we repaired the chain, and paid it out again along with the others.

Some hours after the conclusion of this operation, the weather again became frightful. The Gulf of Stora was one vast breaker, the monstrous waves of which rolled heavily into our anchoring-ground. I ordered the hatches to be battened down. Our small boats and some of the men were washed away, while the corvette plunged in the billows to her mizzen-mast. A score of barks were dashed ashore ; three others, moored near us, foundered at their anchors ; our larboard chain broke, and we began to drive, though very slowly.

As a measure of safety, in this most violent gale, I had had the end of the swinging cable carried forward. I now cut the stoppers which held it on the stern, hoping by so doing to regain the ground we had lost, and by hoisting the mizzen, to keep my ship between the waves of the open and the surf which rolled off the shore, and to keep clear of the breakers that were now dangerously near us. The hope proved vain ! Nothing could resist the fury of the sea, which gradually mastered us. At half-past two we touched the bottom. Our position was hopeless !

I assembled my officers, the harbour-master, the mate, and some captains who had taken refuge on board, and invited their suggestions. Their unanimous opinion coincided with my own,—that we should pay out all the cables to avoid

touching on the rocks of the Pointe-Noire, and endeavour to take the land in a creek of comparatively easy access, lying south of the breakers in which, within a few minutes, we had just seen a merchant-ship break up and disappear. We were fortunate enough to succeed in this delicate operation; and the corvette, after receiving some severe shocks, took the ground on a bank of hard sand, mingled with rocks, about forty fathoms from the shore. The naval commandant at Stora immediately despatched to our assistance as many as could be spared of the garrison of Philippeville; and the inhabitants of the town also hastened to offer what help they could. It is owing to so noble a devotion, which proved fatal to some of these generous heroes, that we were able to save a portion of the crew.

With spars and timbers lashed together, we contrived to construct a kind of bridge, or platform; and the work of rescue began. The men defiled across it, one by one, without confusion, and with all that heroic coolness which the crew of the *Marne* had not failed to show throughout the calamity. Finding the brig was being carried further aground, I cut away the mizzen-mast, hoping it would fall in such a way as to afford us another means of escape. But as the last blow was given, a tremendous wave shook the corvette from stem to stern; the mast fell on the deck, and the corvette split asunder into three portions. The "bridge," therefore, was no longer of use, except to those who had assembled on the taffrail. The main-mast next went by the board; and I ordered all the survivors within reach of it to glide ashore upon the platform thus fortunately offered. The midshipman of the *Marne* and myself profited by this means of safety; and immediately afterwards a mighty billow fell upon the shattered wreck and overwhelmed it. When it had receded, the main-mast was thrown much nearer in-shore, and those

clinging to it were able to save themselves. I remained upon it, along with the carpenter, a man of courage and intelligence. The next time the mast was driven forward I made him strike for the land, and thus I was the last to be saved. My strength had given way; but I have since learned that a sailor, named Zevaco, and M. Dessouliers, a colonist, generously risked their lives to drag me to shore, just as the sea was on the point of washing over me, and carrying me to destruction.

I have now to particularize some incidents of painful losses and heroic devotedness. Fifty-two men are missing, including the surgeon-major, the commissary, midshipman Karche, and my second officer, Lieutenant Dagoru, an officer of rare merit, whose death my heart will long deplore.

Permit me to draw attention to the admirable conduct of the crew of the *Marne*. Not a cry—not a murmur—not a sign of feebleness; my orders, to the very last moment, were executed as implicitly as in ordinary circumstances, and I received welcome proofs of strong affection. Wounded in the leg, it was through the care of my men that I was able to reach the main-mast; and I was forced to employ all my authority to induce them to leave it before I myself did.

Midshipman de Nougarede, the only officer saved, remained constantly by his captain's side, obeyed my instructions with admirable coolness, and helped effectually to diminish the number of victims.

The French captain, in concluding his report, says that he trusts his superiors will think that every man did his duty, and that he himself attempted all that was humanly possible to save, in the first place, the ship, and in the second, the crew. "We have experienced," he adds, "the consequences



WRECK OF THE "MARNE."

of an extraordinary gale. We struggled energetically, but the struggle was unequal. Twenty-four ships shattered on the coast of Stora, and three sunk at anchor, will indicate the nature of the storm we fought against,—a storm unparalleled in the whole course of my career. I may relate an incident, which would appear incredible had it not been seen by upwards of two thousand spectators. After the last survivor had quitted the wreck of the *Marne*, a capsized brig, driven by one of those mighty masses of water which had assailed us, was carried clean over the fragments of the wreck, so that its bowsprit was embedded in the cliffs !”

XXVIII.

LOSS OF THE "PEGASUS."

July 1843.



THE *Pegasus* was lost among the archipelago of the Farne Islands, at no great distance from the rock on which the *Forfarshire* was wrecked.

The *Pegasus* was a well-built and well-found steamer, which, for some years, had been engaged in the trade between Hull and Leith. Her master, Captain Miller, was an excellent seaman, and having formerly commanded one of the London and Leith smacks, was well acquainted with the navigation of the coast.

She left Leith at half-past six in the evening of Wednesday, the 19th of July 1843, with twenty cabin passengers on board, and a rather larger number in the steerage, including a detachment from the 56th Foot. Her crew amounted to fourteen, all told.

It was a calm and pleasant evening, though a slight haze rested on the water. At half-past ten the *Pegasus* steamed past Berwick harbour. At midnight she was off the classic coast of Holy Island, and steered for what is termed the Fairway, a channel between the Farne group of islands and the mainland. It is about a mile wide, and deep enough for

the largest ships, but the numerous sunken rocks that stud it render the passage very dangerous. However, lights and buoys are stationed at every critical point; and we are told that on the night in question the buoy which marked the Goldstone rock, as well as the Farne lights, were clearly discernible. Not the less, while proceeding at full speed, the *Pegasus* struck upon the Goldstone, which was at the time completely under water. The shock was so slight as to alarm very few of the passengers; and some minutes elapsed before they understood the real character of the position in which they had been suddenly placed.

As soon as the vessel struck, the captain gave the order, "Back her!" to which the engineer immediately responded. At a later date much discussion arose whether this was a proper order; and it was asserted that if the vessel had remained upon the rock, she might have held together until morning, though exposed to a succession of shocks. On the other hand, it was alleged, and very justly, that the rock might have proved too sharp and abrupt to afford the vessel any support; and notwithstanding the rapidity with which she filled, her captain might reasonably hope to get her ashore before she foundered. At all events, the captain acted as his judgment dictated; but the water poured in so swiftly, so heavily, and so continuously, that the fires were quickly extinguished, and the machinery soon stopped. The lower compartments of the ship soon filled, and even upon the most inexperienced came the conviction that they stood on the brink of eternity.

Unhappily, at this conjuncture the bonds of discipline were loosened, as is too often the case on board the ships of private traders. Confusion everywhere prevailed. The boats were lowered, but in a moment were overcrowded; while in the haste they were capsized almost as soon as their keels

touched the surface of the water ; and of those who had frantically leaped into them some were driven against the steamer's paddles, others floated for a time amidst the waves, while a few of the more active clambered up the side and regained the deck.

"Among the faithless, faithful," stood *one* heroic and intrepid spirit,—a minister of the gospel,—the Rev. J. Morrell Mackenzie, of Glasgow. On the afternoon of the day which had terminated in such a night, he had parted from his wife at Portobello ; and, it is said, with such a singular sadness of emotion, that his wife, at the time, was troubled by it as by an omen of approaching misfortune. When, some twenty to twenty-five minutes after the ship had struck, she was about to heel to the starboard side and go down, Mr. Mackenzie, making no vain effort to save himself, collected as many as he could on the quarter-deck, and, kneeling in their midst, he offered up prayer to the Almighty Father ; humbly uttering his and their submission to the Divine will, and resting in confidence on the loving promises of the Saviour.

It is painful to reflect that if the officers had shown any promptitude of decision, and the crew had obeyed orders, the passengers on board the *Pegasus* might have been saved. The boats, if properly launched, would have held a considerable number. The night was clear, and the sea calm ; a raft might easily have been constructed, and the shore was not three miles distant ; facilities for keeping afloat in the water for a few hours were at hand, and, if used, would have rescued many a poor unfortunate. But the wildest confusion prevailed on board the vessel from the moment that she struck. The mate, it is true, burned a few blue lights as signals of distress, but these were not perceived on the shore. The report of a gun

could not have failed to arouse the fishermen ; but there was not a gun on the *Pegasus*.

As she was about settling down, a few of the most composed flung off their clothes, and determined on a struggle for life. The captain was not one of these. The catastrophe had unmanned him ; and meeting the engineer as the *Pegasus* sank lower and yet lower, he shook hands with him, exclaiming, in an agony of despair, " Alas ! alas ! we are all going to the bottom."

The ship lurched forward—went down by the head—and all was over !

It was fully four hours after this event that some fishermen of Holy Island discovered planks and spars floating about, and immediately pushed off in their boats to find the wreck. They fell in with a boat, having one man on board ; and, altogether, they succeeded in rescuing six individuals, two of whom they found clinging to the mast of the vessel, which rose some five feet above the surface of the waves. They proved to be the carpenter of the *Pegasus* and a passenger.

One of the six saved was Mr. Hood, the engineer ; and his simple narrative of the incidents of this great disaster is more impressive than any elaborate description by a professional pen.

" We left Leith," he says, " at about twenty minutes past six o'clock on Wednesday evening, and passed Berwick harbour about half-past ten. It was a very good night, but a little hazy on the water. The wind was light from the north, and the sea smooth. About half-past twelve I was in the engine-room, which is on deck—the engine being a single one—when I found the vessel had struck against something.

I instantly threw the engine out of gear, and whilst I was in the act of doing that, the captain, who was on the bridge between the paddle-boxes looking out, shouted to me to stop, and put her back. I stopped, and backed accordingly, and that brought the vessel clear. Then the master ordered me to turn ahead; and after that was done, I found the water coming in rapidly.

“One of the seamen was on the bridge with the captain looking out. When I observed the water coming in, I went up to the master and told him, when he ordered the man at the helm to put the vessel about, with the intention of running her ashore. The man did so, and we continued going ahead towards the shore from that time till about a quarter past one o'clock, when she went down. When I came from the bridge—having told the master of the water coming in—I went again into the engine-room, and saw the water coming in very fast.

“I then went to the man at the wheel, and told him how the water was coming in, and urged him to get the vessel ashore as fast as possible. In returning to the engine-room from doing that, I met the mate coming out of his berth, as the watch was just being changed at that time. I told the mate the vessel was making water very fast, and that he was to pay particular attention to the man at the wheel. I then went into the engine-room, and remained there, sometimes standing outside of the door, till I saw the water up to the top of the cylinder-cover. The steam was then nearly exhausted, and the engine was stopping. I then left the engine-house, and went up to the quarter-deck, when I found that the two boats had been lowered into the water, and both of them swamped. The larboard boat, I understood, had been swamped in being lowered down, and the starboard one by the rush of the people to get into it. I then went forward, and to the top of

the foremast, in order to see if there were any boats near ; but I saw none, and returned to the quarter-deck.

“I then found that the vessel was fast going down head foremost. Just then I saw the master, and we shook hands, he exclaiming at the time, ‘Alas ! alas ! we are all going to the bottom.’ The captain complained of the boats being lowered down without his knowing it. We stood together for a short time, and then the master, I think, went forward ; but I never saw him afterwards. The vessel then took a heavy lurch to the larboard side. The second mate was near me, and I asked him to get a piece of loose wood that was lying near. It was thrown overboard to endeavour to save ourselves by. He threw it over, and we jumped into the water immediately afterwards, and got hold of it. The vessel, in recovering from the lurch, threw us on the deck again with the wood to which we were clinging. I then clung to the after-mast, and went up it as high as I could get ; but there were two ladies higher up it than I was.

“When I had been a minute or so upon the mast, the vessel went down ; and when I found myself amongst the water, I threw myself off, and swam a short time till I got hold of the gangway plank. There was a passenger on it at the time. After I had got on it, the apprentice-boy got on it also ; and we all three continued on it till about three o’clock in the morning, when the boy got exhausted and fell off. The passenger remained on it for about an hour longer, and he then fell off also ; and I remained on it till the *Martello* steamer came and picked me up. It was then about half-past five on Thursday morning.

“I found nothing the matter with me when in the water ; but immediately on getting out I found I could not walk. The mate, William Brown, was picked up before I was. I was conveyed into the engineer’s room ; and when we got to

Leith, about three o'clock in the afternoon, I felt tolerably well. After I had been a good while on the plank, I saw William Brown in the small boat a short distance from me, and we spoke to each other several times. I saw the boat before Brown got into it. He had, I think, first laid hold of the engine-house hatch, and had seized the boat as it was floating past him. When I went up the foremast, George Taylor, the carpenter, came up after me, and he was taken from it by the *Martello*, along with one of the passengers. Daniel Campbell, the fireman, got into one of the boats, and was picked up in it by Markwell, one of the Holy Island fishermen. There was a good look-out kept all the time. The master and crew were quite sober; and I cannot account for the boat having got upon the rock. I know nothing about the position of the buoys or lights. I understood the boats were lowered by the passengers without the approbation or knowledge of the master."

XXIX.

WRECK OF THE "DORIS."

September 19, 1845.



AT half-past seven, on the evening of Sunday, the 19th September 1845, the population of Brest was deeply moved by a very painful event, which plunged a large number of families into mourning.

The schooner *Doris*, after a long and laborious service in the West Indian waters, returned to the celebrated French sea-port of Brest to refit, under the command of a young but distinguished officer, Lieutenant Jules Lemoine.

The homeward voyage had been wearisome, but the sight of the sunny shores of France had revived the spirits of the crew, exhausted by a protracted voyage, and by the perils they had with difficulty escaped in the latitude of the Azores, where, for several days, the schooner had been buffeted by violent storms. But all the past seemed now like a dream: a few minutes, and the *Doris* would drop anchor in the roadstead of Brest. She had already threaded the channels of the Goulet, and was running through the open sea, with difficulty stemming, though under full sail, a very strong ebb-tide. Her cross-jack-sail had just been reefed, and orders had been given to let go the anchor, when suddenly an irresistible south-westerly hurricane came up, accompanied by a storm of hail.

Caught abreast by the squall, the *Doris* succumbed to its fury, and heeling over to port, admitted the waves freely through her hatchways. A few seconds, and nothing could be seen of the *Doris* but her topgallant-masts: she had gone down by the stern.

M. Bénét, a midshipman, serving on board the guard-ship, having noticed the sudden extinction of all the lights of the schooner, the movements of which he had been following, and anticipating some calamity, ordered the alarm-gun to be fired, manned all the boats of the *Robuste*, and taking under his own charge the long-boat, made for the point where he had last seen the *Doris*, and whence cries of distress could be heard to proceed. On reaching it, he beheld a scene which transcends description. Clinging desperately to the ship's masts and yards, and floating pieces of timber, or swimming to and fro, a throng of men were struggling with the courage of despair against the waves which incessantly threatened to engulf them.

Out of sixty-seven persons who had composed the crew of the *Doris*, M. Bénét, whose courageous resolution and remarkable promptitude of action are worthy of all praise, had the happiness to rescue two-and-thirty from certain death. The remainder, with the exception of four men who, after almost incredible efforts, contrived to reach the shore, perished, either on board, or in their attempts to swim to land.

It may be added, as a curious fact, that the boat of the war-corvette *L'Allier*, sent in search of the crew of the *Doris*, having pulled as far as the entrance of the Goulet, was fortunate enough to save four men who, for some hours, had lain exposed on the hull of their fishing-boat, capsized by a strong squall. But for the catastrophe of the *Doris*, it is probable that these unfortunate fishermen would have drifted out of the roadstead for lack of assistance, and have found in the rapid currents of the Goulet an inevitable death.

WRECK OF THE "DORIS."



XXX.

WRECK OF THE "PAPIN."

December 7, 1845.



At two o'clock in the afternoon of the 5th of December 1845 the steam-corvette *Papin* sailed from Cadiz, on her voyage to the Senegal,* steering in the direction known to sailors as S.W. $\frac{1}{4}$ W. Both on the 5th and 6th the sky was clear, the sea was smooth, and all things seemed to indicate a prosperous course; but on the night of the 6th the wind blew up from the west with extreme violence.

On Saturday the 6th, at half-past eleven in the evening, the ship took the ground to the north of Mazagan,† striking on a sandbank, at two or three cable-lengths from land.

It was impossible to back the engines, the paddles being already embedded deep in sand; yet for three hours the ship gallantly withstood the heavy shocks to which she was exposed from a rolling, heaving, tempestuous sea.

At four o'clock in the morning she was completely waterlogged, and the waves swept over her deck from stem to stern. At five the funnel fell, crushing several persons in its descent.

* A French settlement at the mouth of the river Senegal, on the west coast of Africa. The capital, St. Louis, was founded in 1626. It depends almost entirely on the gum trade.

† A small town on the coast of Morocco, to the south of Sallee (a nest of pirates, in old days, with which every reader of "Robinson Crusoe" will be familiar).

At half-past five, M. Marey-Monge, the French consul at Mogador, who was standing on the after-deck of the vessel, was hurled by a wave into the hold, where he perished. M. Dieul, the second lieutenant, experienced, a few moments later, the same fate.

Many of the crew leaped overboard to seize the fragments of the ship's boats which floated all around her, or attempted to save themselves by swimming; but most of them perished. A few, by desperate courage, added to unusual powers of endurance, contrived to gain the shore, landing at Azimour, a village about three miles to the north of the place where the *Papin* had run aground. They fell in with some Moors, who eagerly proffered their assistance. One of them gave his berousse to M. Du Bourdieu, commissary at Gorée, who was a passenger on board the *Papin*; and some camels laden with brushwood coming up, the Arabs kindled, with signs of the liveliest sympathy, an immense fire to warm the castaways.

At eleven in the morning, it was found that the persons who had succeeded in making the shore numbered thirty in all. The mainmast of the ship, which hitherto had stood like a tower, though the *Papin* had parted in two behind the paddle-boxes, now went by the board, killing in its fall about thirty unfortunate creatures.

Animated by a generous spirit of devotion, Messrs. Douemard, second master-gunner, Mirabeau, second mate, Desforges and Natalani, sailors, and Royot, a marine, who were among the saved, embarked in a small boat that had been thrown ashore, with the hope of saving any persons still alive on board the wreck. They crossed in safety the first two lines of breakers; but at the third their boat capsized, and was driven back to land, where they made an almost miraculous escape.



WRECK OF THE "PAPIN."

Meantime, Mr. Readman, British consular agent at Mazagan, who had set out that same morning for Rabat, learned that a French vessel had been driven ashore. He immediately returned to the scene of the disaster.

After providing, with admirable forethought and humanity, for the immediate necessities of the little company who had so fortunately reached the land, he used all his influence to induce the Arabs to visit the wreck, and bring off all they might find on board of it. The Arabs set to work with as much intrepidity as humanity, and, in less than two hours, they had carried ashore four-and-forty persons, supporting them on their shoulders, and swimming with them through a still frightful tempest.

XXXI.

LOSS OF THE "TWEED."

February 1846.



THE *Tweed*, a fine steam-ship, engaged in the West Indian service, of 1800 tons and 500 horse-power, and commanded by Captain George Parsons, sailed from the Havannah, the capital of Cuba, for Mexico on Tuesday evening, February 9, 1846.

She carried a crew, including engineers, steward, and stokers, of eighty-nine; and she had on board sixty-two passengers. Her cargo, part of which was quicksilver, was valued at £18,000.

After leaving the noble harbour of the Queen of the Antilles, as Cuba has justly been called, she kept a westerly course for about twelve hours, running eighty knots with a fair wind. On the following day the wind began to blow harder, and experienced eyes detected the indications of an approaching storm, which indeed broke in all its fury upon the *Tweed* about midnight—the thunder pealing continuously, the lightning darting arrowy flashes across a lurid sky. The wind veered round to the north, and continued to blow from that quarter, with a considerable sea running, all through Thursday, while from the dark cloudy aspect of the sky it was impossible to take any observations.

But a storm at sea is a contingency expected by those who go down to the deep in tall ships, and no alarm was experienced by the passengers, no apprehensions entertained by the officers and crew. The *Tweed* made her way against wind and sea with her usual steadiness, until about half-past three in the morning of Friday the 12th the look-out suddenly shouted, “Breakers ahead!” The captain, ever cautious and vigilant, had been on deck for the last hour, and at this intimation of a terrible danger, he promptly ordered the engines to be reversed and the helm put a-starboard. These precautions were ineffectual to stop the fatal progress of the vessel. In a few seconds she struck, and four times successively dashed against the rocks with a force which seemed to batter in her hull and cripple her machinery. The engines ceased to move, and the steam poured out of the cylinders in clouds which rolled through the hatchways and spread over the deck. It was upon the Alacranes reef, in latitude $22^{\circ} 30'$ north, and longitude $89^{\circ} 30'$ west, and about seventy miles north of the coast of Yucatan, that the *Tweed* had found her destiny.

Such violent concussions, and the disorder which they produced, necessarily roused from their sleep the passengers and those of the crew and officers who were not on duty. They rushed upon deck in their night-clothes, or only partially clad, to find the ship lying on her starboard side, a prey to the incessant attacks of the hungry billows, which soon carried away three of the boats, besides several persons. The vessel then lurched over to leeward, and again and again beat helplessly upon the rock, her timbers rending into splinters. Consider that the night was intensely dark, that the wind blew with fearful violence, that the roar of the breakers deadened all other sounds, that billow after billow poured over the wreck, that spars and beams were flying in all directions, —and we shall be inclined to acknowledge that the scene was

one of the most heart-rending and awful character. It was almost impossible for the cheerfullest to cherish any hope of safety.

Captain Parsons now ordered the masts to be cut away; but the crew found it impossible to go below for axes, the lower part of the ship being an absolute mass of wreck and ruin. They severed the lanyards with their knives, however; and thus deprived of their supports, the masts went by the board one after another, and fell, shrouds and all, into the seething waves. Two boats still remained uninjured on the lee-side, and these the captain filled with passengers. At what seemed a favourable opportunity, they were lowered into the water; but all the care taken by the crew availed them nothing: the heavy seas capsized them, and the shrieks of their occupants told of the fate that had befallen them.

One of our modern poets has attempted to indicate the special horrors of a shipwreck. He says:—

“ Five hundred souls in one instant of dread
Are hurried o’er the deck,
And fast the miserable ship
Becomes a lifeless wreck.
Her keel hath struck on a hidden rock,
Her planks are torn asunder,
And down come her masts with a reeling shock
And a hideous crash like thunder.
Her sails are dragged in the brine,
That gladdened late the skies;
And her pendant that kissed the fair moonshine
Down many a fathom lies.
Her beauteous sides, whose rainbow hues
Gleamed softly from below,
And flung a warm and sunny flush
O’er the wreaths of murmuring snow,
To the coral rocks are hurrying down,
To sleep amid colours as bright as their own.”

But the poetical colouring of this picturesque sketch is not warranted by facts. The real details of a shipwreck are ten times more frightful—shall we not say more repulsive?—than the poet would have his readers believe; and it is the

duty of the chronicler to record them with an entire absence of exaggeration.

The wreck of the *Tweed*, and those who remained of its passengers and crew, were driven in ghastly confusion full upon the reef. Of the latter, some were washed ashore alive; the dead bodies of others were flung there by the disdainful sea. Many there were who clung to the larger portions of the wreck until daylight came. How terrible the spectacle it revealed! Upon what horrors fell the rays of a tropical sun! No land was visible all around the horizon, and of the *Tweed* nothing could be seen but a line of spars, and planks, and broken doors, and beds, and crushed boats, barrels, seamen's chests, and baggage, extending for nearly a mile along the brink of the reef; while the port-side of the vessel, from the sponson to the figure-head, was lying exposed to the inrush of every wave, with some forty human beings desperately clinging to the bowsprit and jib-boom, as offering their only chance of ultimate safety.

Those upon the reef now began to look about them. They were standing ankle-deep in water, and scarcely any had escaped without a lesser or greater degree of injury. It became their first care to protect themselves from the cold, and for this purpose they unceremoniously broke open the trunks and chests that lay nearest to them, and appropriated any clothing they could find. Their next object was to construct, if possible, some place of safety; and they searched about for the shallowest part of the rock inside the breakers. Three of the ship's boats had been driven on the reef, but in a bruised and battered condition, which rendered them useless. Yet they could not hope to escape from their sea-washed asylum *without* a boat, and despair therefore induced them to attempt the repair of the mail-boat, as being the least injured.

But before they could carry their idea into execution, a sail

was discovered in the offing. It proved to be the brig *Emilio*, commanded by a Spaniard named Villaverde, who took on board the survivors of the crew and passengers, treated them with generous hospitality, and carried them to Jisal, whence they afterwards embarked for Havannah, arriving there in safety on the 3rd of March.

XXXII.

LOSS OF THE "CENTRAL AMERICA."

September 1847.



THE *Central America*, a large and noble steam-ship, left the harbour of the Havannah on the 8th of September 1847, bound for New York.

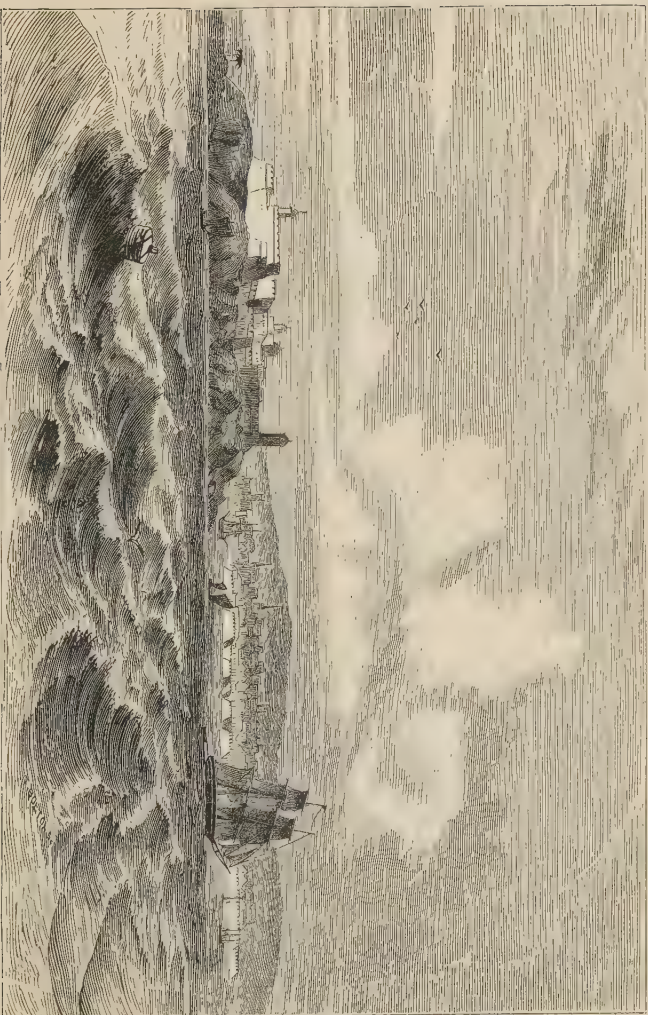
She had on board a crew of one hundred and one men, and no fewer than four hundred and ninety-one passengers, most of whom were miners from California, returning to the land of their birth, either to live in peace and luxury on the fortunes earned by their strong arms, or to fetch their families to accompany them back to the land of gold. "Seldom," it is said, "was so large an amount of money owned by passengers, as in the case of those who that day left the port of Havannah with glad hearts and eager anticipations of the future they were about to realize. Many were possessed of large sums; and there were but few whose wealth did not number hundreds, while several reckoned their gold by *thousands*, of dollars. There were also on board a considerable number of helpless women and children, the wives and little ones of the passengers; and, lastly, the brave crew; and, presiding over the whole, the noble-hearted, courageous captain, Herndon by name."

When the *Central America* quitted the splendid port of the

Havannah, the wind was fair, and the sky as cloudless as only a tropic sky *can* be. But when she got out to sea, the wind suddenly freshened, and in twenty-four hours it blew a gale, which increased to a hurricane, stirring the very depths of ocean, to judge from the great height of the billows, and the foamy crests which crowned them. The ship strained and creaked, and at every lurch seemed to start some plank or spar. Such was the violence of wind and wave, that she could not hope to resist them long; and as early as the morning of the 11th, apprehensions of danger were awakened in the breasts both of passengers and crew. The men in charge of the engines reported that the ship had sprung a leak. The captain, on learning this terrible mishap, set all hands to work in the hope of preventing further damage; but the inflowing water soon cut off all communication with the coal-bunkers, the fires went out, and the ship fell, almost helpless, into the trough of the sea. The men, formed into bailing parties, did their best, and in doing their best were heartily encouraged by the captain and officers, to keep down the water.

After a while steam was again got up, and a successful attempt was made "to rig the donkey-engines" for the purpose of clearing the hold; but the pumps were soon disarranged, and ceased to work.

Now that the water was hopelessly gaining upon them, in spite of their pumping and bailing, and that every effort to stop the leak had failed, Captain Herndon next attempted to make a drag, by cutting away the foremast, so as to get the ship again "head on." In carrying out this manœuvre, however, the mast unfortunately fell in such a manner as to be swept under the hull, where it remained for some time, striking in such a way as probably to increase the leak. "By paying out enough hawser, they got a drag, which brought



THE HARBOUR OF HAVANNAH.

them for a while head on. But the hawser parted before long, and left them again at the mercy of the waves."

By this time the water had gained on the lower cabins; warm water, heated at times by the boiler, as the vessel careened over, until it was almost unbearable. It drove the women and children into the men's saloon, where a curious spectacle might be seen by any observer calm enough to take in all its details. The rough Californian miners, "bearded like the pard," and "full of strange oaths," were collecting the gold dust which they had gathered by the labour of months of hardship, and storing it in their belts or handkerchiefs, to bind about their bodies. Others, panic-stricken, expecting every moment a fierce struggle for life, and unwilling to be weighted in the struggle by their burden of dross, were scattering it wildly about the cabin-floors. Full pouches, containing in some instances ten thousand dollars, lay untouched upon the sofas. Carpet-bags were torn open, and the glittering metal—for the sake of which man sins and suffers so much—was poured out as if it were water. One of the passengers, who afterwards escaped, flung about the cabin twenty thousand dollars, and, like another Timon, bade who would satisfy his thirst for gold. But it was passed by as—what it was—the veriest dross, which could neither purchase life, safety, nor forgiveness.

A life-preserver, in such a conjuncture, was worth all the gold of California. Nearly all the passengers were supplied with this most useful *succedaneum*; yet the prospect before them was terrible, and when the ship sank many lost heart and sank without a struggle. On the whole, however, the courage exhibited was marvellous; and not even the women shed a tear, or raised a cry of agony. On the afternoon of Saturday, when the most sanguine had abandoned hope, a sail

was suddenly reported to windward. The usual signals of distress were made, and the ship bore down towards them. She proved to be the brig *Marine* of Boston, which had suffered heavily in the gale; but her captain was too noble-hearted to leave a gallant company to perish without making an effort to relieve them. "Until her hopeful appearance," said a female passenger, one of those who escaped, "not a tear had been shed that I am aware of on board the steamer. Till the moment we first espied the sail which we believed brought us relief, we had remained passively awaiting the result. There seemed to be a perfect calmness, which I could not have believed it possible for so great a number of persons to exhibit under such fearful circumstances. But when the brig hove in sight, there were tears of joy, and the men worked with renewed energy and hope. The women besought them to work with all their might, and said they would themselves assist in the labour if the men did not do their best. In fact, some of them were so eager to help, that they even tried to put on men's clothing in order to go and work at the pumps."

It was at about half-past three the brig came under the stern of the *Central America*; and, without any unnecessary delay, they began to remove the women and children to her deck. The task was not an easy one: the brig, being much lighter than the ship, soon drifted away to leeward, and the distance growing more and more considerable, the boats were longer and longer in making the trip; and as the sea rolled very heavily, only a few could be carried at a time. With what anxiety must those on board of the wreck have watched for the return of the skiff on which all their hopes of safety depended! Yet the wild rough miners, inured as they were to a life of violence and recklessness, made no attempt to save themselves until all the women and children were saved. Again and again the boat returned; again and again she

made for the brig with her precious freight; yet not a murmur was heard, no exclamation of selfish despair arose! At length every woman had been securely transported to the brig. Then came the turn of the crew and the male passengers. About forty of these reached the *Marine* before the ship went down.

Meantime, the night had come on, but the work of bailing had proceeded incessantly, though the water gained faster upon the vessel. Most of the crew, and many of the passengers, still toiled at the ineffectual pumps. The captain, silent, calm, resolute, was at the wheel; yet his eye and his voice seemed everywhere about the wreck, and his orders were firmly given, his exhortations cheerily uttered. When he saw that the last moment was come, he declared he should not quit the ship. "Thank God," he said to a friend, "the women and children are safe; do you take the next boat." He attempted to charge him with a farewell message for his wife, but his emotion overcame him. After a brief interval he recovered himself, and continued to give his orders as the boat returned from the brig.

It was now just eight o'clock in the evening. A tremendous sea broke upon the creaking and straining vessel, which, all at once, like a man who has been smitten by his death-wound, made a sudden plunge, and then disappeared. In the whirlpool created by her sinking all on board were engulfed, and some five hundred human beings might be seen struggling with the boiling waters. A scene ensued, for the survivors, surpassing all the romance of shipwreck, all the horrors—says a chronicler—with which imagination has invested it. A flash of lightning rent the veil of darkness, and revealed the greater number of the crew and passengers floating helplessly

on the waves of the Atlantic, with nothing to sustain them but life-preservers, and such spars and fragments of wreck as came within their reach. Apparently the doom of all was inevitable. But, by a remarkable providence, some were saved; and from these survivors were gathered many of the most interesting details of the catastrophe.

Mr. George, who was one of them, says that he heard neither shriek nor groan; only, as the great ship went down, with arrowy speed, a rush and a roar of waters. He himself was sucked in by the whirlpool to a depth which seemed unfathomable, and to a darkness which was darker than a moonless, starless night. He was not so much stunned as stifled; and his sensations on rising to the surface were almost as painful, from their reaction, as those which he experienced in sinking. When he recovered consciousness, he was able to distinguish the objects around him. The waves, as they rose and fell, showed "a crowd of heads." Those who had lost their life-preservers, or the spars to which they had clung, were wildly snatching at the pieces of wreck tossing about them in every direction. Keen cries of agony mingled into one indescribable lamentation; and occasionally some bold and stalwart swimmer shouted to the brig for assistance. Assistance! Alas! she was already far beyond the reach of human voice.

At first, the waves dashed the poor struggling wretches against one another; but speedily they began to separate, and the last farewells were taken. One man was heard crying to another,—“If you escape, Frank, give my love to my dear wife.” But even as he spoke his comrade was washed off his plank, and sank to rise no more.

“Many,” we are told, “were desirous to isolate themselves as much as possible, fearful lest they should be dragged down by some desperate struggle for life. Others, *afraid of the*

loneliness”—a pathetic touch !—“cried to their neighbours to keep together. One man, finding himself solitary, shouted until he was hoarse to find a companion, and at length his heart leaped for joy at sight of another, with two life-preservers buoying him up, drifting towards him. He approached nearer and nearer, and presently a wave threw them together. They touched. The living man shrieked in the face of a corpse. The poor fellow had been drowned by the dash of the billows, or had perished from exhaustion.”

When Mr. George had gradually drifted far from the fellowship of his unfortunate companions, he began to realize the full peril of his situation. The night was very dark. Occasionally the scudding clouds would break asunder, and a star or two throw forth a ray of light ; but this was very seldom, and afforded but a faint gleam of hope that the dawn would be calm and fair. The sea rolled heavily, and successively the poor strugglers, who clung to their planks with all the energy of desperation, rode, as it were, on the crest of a mountain or sank into the depths of a gulf. Then there was also a dread of sharks. To breathe was difficult, owing to the masses of water continually dashed upon them. For two or three hours the water was not unpleasantly cold, and it was not until about one o'clock on Sunday morning, when they had been nearly five hours adrift, and a fresh keen wind arose, that their limbs experienced any numbness.

It was soon after this new anxiety was felt that some of the survivors thought they saw lights in the distance. The hope, at first so faint, gradually developed into certainty ; and every heart grew glad as the welcome radiance was seen to shine from a bark which, in answer to their cries, bore rapidly down upon them. “Never did I feel so thankful in all my life,” said Mr. George ; “I never knew what gratitude was before. Whether I wept or no I cannot tell, but I know I

was astonished to hear my own laughter ringing in my ears. Why I laughed I know not. That verse,

‘God moves in a mysterious way
His wonders to perform ;
He plants his footsteps in the sea,
And rides upon the storm,’

kept passing in and out of me—through me, rather—as if I had been the pipe of an organ. It came not by my own volition, but seemed irresistibly borne to my memory. When the lights approached nearer, voices around me shouted, ‘Ship ahoy ! boat ahoy !’ and then I began to shout too. I had never a doubt that I should be saved till I saw the lights pass by about half a mile from where I was, and recede in the distance. Then, indeed, I gave myself up for lost. But I slowly drifted toward her again, till I could discern her hull and one of her masts, and presently I floated close to her, and shouted, and was taken up. When I got on deck I could not stand ; I did not know till then how exhausted I was.”

Another survivor tells a curious anecdote. He had been some hours in the water, he says, and had floated away from the rest, when the voice of his mother suddenly sounded in his ears. Upwards of thirty years had passed away since he, a thoughtless schoolboy, had stolen one evening into the room of a dying sister, and devoured some grapes which had been placed beside her bed for her refreshment during the night. Terrified at his selfishness, he had slunk off to his chamber ; but his mother, guessing who was the guilty intruder, had come to him, and said, “Johnny, did you eat sister’s grapes ?” And now these words, uttered in a reproachful tone, again sounded distinctly in his ear. He heard his poor mother, and saw her pale face, and eyes full of tears, as she turned away and left him. The act had wounded his conscience at the time, but, in the lapse of years, had been forgotten. Now,

however, it rose upon his mind with a clearness and force which were appalling.

The bark which had so happily come to the rescue of the survivors was named the *Ellen*. The circumstances under which she appeared on the scene must needs be related.

“I was forced by the wind,” says her captain, “to sail a little out of my course. Just as I had altered it, a small bird flew across the ship once or twice, and then darted against my face. I, however, took no notice of this circumstance till precisely the same thing occurred the second time, which caused me to think it somewhat remarkable. While I was thus reflecting about the incident, the same mysterious bird, for the third time, made its appearance, and went through the very same extraordinary manœuvres. Upon this, I was induced to re-alter my course into the original one in which I had at first been steering. I had not gone far when I heard strange noises, and on endeavouring to discover from whence they proceeded, I found I was in the midst of people who had been shipwrecked. Instantly I took measures to rescue them, and in a few moments succeeded in getting four of them on board. Not one of them could speak, all being completely insensible from exhaustion.”

XXXIII.

LOSS OF THE "AVENGER."

December 1847.



THE *Avenger*, a steam-frigate, armed with six heavy guns, and having on board a crew of two hundred and fifty men, sailed from Gibraltar on the 17th December 1847. Her commander, a gallant and able young officer, Captain Charles G. E. Napier, being desirous of sparing his coal-stores, gave orders that the steam should be worked at the lowest power compatible with keeping the wheels up to the rate of sailing. On Monday the 20th, she was running with square yards, at the rate of eight or nine knots an hour, steering about east by south, under double-reefed topsails and reefed foresail. The night was dark and gusty, with a sea rolling heavily, and occasionally loud peals of thunder were heard, accompanied with keen, swift flashes of lightning.

On such a night the look-outs on board ship have need of all their vigilance, and the subordinate officers are not without anxiety to see that every order is punctually obeyed. Most of the officers of the *Avenger* had collected in the gun-room, with the exception of the captain, who had withdrawn to his sleeping-cabin. Here he was joined by the master and second master, and they occupied themselves for a few minutes in

examining the charts and determining the vessel's course. The two officers then went upon deck, and Captain Napier desired his steward to take away the light, and to leave, according to custom, a small lamp burning in the fore-cabin. This was done, and the steward returned to his berth. In about half an hour afterwards he heard some officers descend from the quarter-deck and enter the captain's cabin. In about five minutes the captain went upon deck, where he remained a while, and again returned to his cabin; but he had scarcely closed the door before he was once more summoned upon deck by the officer of the watch.

The other officers were on the point of retiring to their berths, when a sudden and violent shock filled them with alarm. This shock was followed by a heavy lurch, which seemed to shake the whole frame of the ship, and loosen every beam. It would be fruitless to attempt a description of the alarm of the *Avenger's* crew, so unexpectedly roused from their serene slumbers to find themselves on the brink of destruction. They rushed in all haste upon deck, some partially clothed, many almost naked. Captain Napier and the master of the ship were standing upon the bridge between the paddle-boxes; the master's assistant, the quartermaster, and two seamen were at the wheel. In another minute the ship lurched heavily to starboard, and the sea swept in a deluge over the fore-castle. There was thenceforth no hope of saving the ship, and Captain Napier gave the order, "Out boats; lower away the boats." They were his last words; for he was immediately afterwards carried off by a sea and drowned.

Lieutenant Rooke, who now took the command, was well qualified to deal with a critical emergency. He saw that if anything was to be done, it must be done at once. He went among the men, therefore, to persuade them to lower the second cutter. But all in vain: they seemed paralyzed by

the suddenness of the disaster, and unable to comprehend the orders and entreaties he poured forth one upon another. "Oh, sir," was their cry, "we are lost ! we are lost !" Finding all his efforts fruitless, he crossed the deck to the port side to help Mr. Betts, the second master, in launching the other cutter. In his way he came upon Larcom, the gunner, who had just come from below with his clothes under his arm, having been in bed when the ship struck. Informing him of his design, the lieutenant crossed to the cutter, where they were joined by Dr. Steel, the surgeon ; Mr. Ayling, the master's assistant ; John Owen, a stoker ; James Morley, a boy ; and W. Hills, the captain's steward. Lieutenant Marryat, the son of the famous sea-novelist, also made his appearance. He was in the act of speaking to one of the party, when the ship gave a heavy lurch to starboard, and the gallant young officer, losing his footing, was washed overboard.

While the survivors were still actively engaged in lowering the cutter, an accident occurred which nearly proved fatal to all their hopes of preservation.

"In lowering the boat, the foremost-fall got jammed ; and the after one going freely, the boat had her stern in the water and her bows in the air. At this moment Dr. Steel threw his cloak, which fortunately got into the sheave-hole of the after-fall, and stopped it."

"Just as the boat touched the water, and before the tackles were unhooked, the ship again struck heavily, and began swinging broadside to the sea, falling over to starboard at the same time ; which, from the cutter being the port one, made her crash with great violence against the ship's side. However, by dint of great exertion, the boat was got free from the tackles, and pulled clear of the ship."

The position of the *Avenger* was now deplorable. Who

could believe she was the noble ship that, an hour before, had breasted the billows in so gallant a trim? She lay broadside to the sea, with her head towards Africa, falling at the same time to windward, so that her deck was all exposed. She had lost her funnel, her fore-mast, main-mast, and mizzen-top-mast, and rolled to and fro—a ghastly ruin. As the boat left her side, some one attempted to burn a blue light, but it went out immediately. Occasionally the wild waves broke over the forecastle and quarter; and Mr. Rooke, hoping to save some of the crew, ordered his men to lie on their oars, and keep the boat's bow to the ship in the event of her falling to pieces. They remained on the watch for an hour and a half, the moon shining out at intervals from behind the heavy cloud-banks, and revealing the outline of the island of Galita, seemingly about ten to twelve miles distant. But the weather growing stormy, the rain descending in torrents, and the cutter's company being exhausted with pulling against a strong current—which, in spite of all their efforts, drew them gradually from the ship—Lieutenant Rooke judged it advisable to run under the lee of Galita; and there, if possible, to remain on their oars until the light was sufficient for landing, and seek assistance for the ship in the event of the island being inhabited.

As his companions concurred in this opinion, the boat's head was turned towards Galita, and they took a last look at the *Avenger*, which appeared to be securely fixed, and likely to hold together for some time.

Worse and worse grew the weather. The boat, carrying a close-reefed sail on a temporary fore-mast, was steered with an oar by the second master. When they had arrived within about two miles of the island, the wind shifted to a heavy squall, accompanied with a storm of hail, lightning, and thunder. Mr. Larcom, the gunner, now relieved the second master

in steering the boat, which was scarcely got round before the storm beat upon her so violently it was thought impossible she could live.

Without intermission the squall continued for about two hours and a half, when the moon again broke through the clouds, and the island of Galita was discovered on the port quarter. Some in the boat exclaimed, "That is the island!" which at the time they supposed to be far distant, as the boat's motion through the water had appeared to be very rapid. The wind still continued to shift suddenly, and at one time it was thought they must have passed the ship; but the night was so dark they could not discern anything clearly many yards from the boat.

In this manner they passed the long and dreary night, exposed to hunger, exhaustion, and cold, and, as Lieutenant Rooke afterwards observed, with little hope that they should survive until morning. The second master seemed to have lost his senses. On being questioned as to their probable situation, or in what direction they ought to steer, he gazed at them vacantly, as if unaware that any answer was required of him. The doctor, the master's assistant, and the boy Morley were lying at the bottom of the boat during the whole night; and the stoker, John Owen, was wrapped in his jacket, and apparently was in a worse condition than the second master. Glad was every heart when the welcome dawn glimmered in the east, and the coast of Africa was discernible about eight or nine miles distant. As Lieutenant Rooke doubted whether the boat could be kept much longer above water, he determined upon attempting a landing; and accordingly steered her towards a small spit of sand, apparently clear of the rocks, and slightly sheltered by a reef projecting into the sea.

From the time the boat had quitted the *Avenger*, Lieutenant

Rooke, notwithstanding his own sufferings, had nobly striven to encourage his despondent comrades. On approaching the shore he exclaimed, in a cheerful voice—"Why, this is something like Don Juan's shipwreck; let us hope we shall find a Haidée,"—alluding to the "Lady of the Isle" who figures in Byron's poem. This was said out of no spirit of bravado, from no reckless indifference to danger; but from a desire to infuse fresh spirit into his exhausted crew, and to animate them in the approaching struggle, which, as he too clearly saw, would be one of "life or death."

On hearing the above words, poor Dr. Steel exclaimed, "Rooke! Rooke! there are other things to think of now." It has been well said that this speech was prophetic: in a few minutes the doctor had ceased to exist.

As they drew near the shore the sail was shifted from the port side to the starboard, and the sheet which Hills, the captain's steward, had manfully held for two hours, was fastened to the thwarts.

The lieutenant now again resigned his place as steerer to Larcom, the gunner, and assisted the others in bailing out the boat, which had shipped a heavy sea on the quarter. The boat had safely made her way within about a hundred and fifty yards from the beach, when the rollers caught her; first lifting her upright, and then, as there was not water enough to float her whole length, capsizing her. Lieutenant Rooke, Larcom, Hills, and the boy Morley succeeded in reaching the shore, but the remainder of their unfortunate companions perished.

In a few minutes a Bedouin Arab, who had been watching the boat from the high ground, descended to the beach, and conducted the castaways to his hut, where he supplied them with some milk. He also lighted a fire, at which they were enabled to dry their clothes.



CAST ASHORE.

They remained with their hospitable entertainer throughout the day; in the evening supping off maize-cake and sour milk. The following morning they started towards Tunis, with the Arab as their guide. Their proceedings are thus described by Lieutenant Rooke :—

“ *Wednesday, December 22nd.*—At about 9 A.M. we started. Our road lay at first over a ridge of high hills, from which we saw nothing of the ship. We then crossed a sandy plain covered with the cactus, which severely wounded my feet; afterwards passed through some wooded ravines, and over an

extensive marsh intersected with brooks. Towards the evening a horseman overtook us ; who, seeing the tired condition of the steward, his feet bleeding, and also suffering from a gash on his head received whilst landing, carried him for about four miles, and when his road lay in a different direction, gave our guide his gun, and a piece of silver for us.

“The night being now dark, and all of us exhausted, we stopped at a Bedouin encampment and asked for shelter, which after some time was granted. We had been walking about ten hours, and got over more than thirty miles of broken ground ; having stopped once for a few minutes to pick the berries off some arbutus-trees, being our only food since breakfast till late that night. We were wet, coverless, and all except myself shoeless.

“They gave us some maize-cake and milk. Seeing horses, I made them understand that they would be well paid if they let us have them to take us on to Biserta that night ; when they made signs that the gates were locked, but that we should have them in the morning.

“*Thursday, December 23rd.*—At daylight we set out, but none of us could walk from swollen feet. After a ride of about fifteen miles, sometimes fording streams, and at others nearly up to our horses’ knees in mud, we arrived about 10 A.M. at Biserta, and went to the house of our consular agent, an Italian, whom I immediately asked to prepare a boat for Tunis.

“The boats here were all too small to send to the wreck, and for which the wind was foul, with a fresh breeze. About 1 P.M. I started for Tunis ; and arrived about 11 P.M. at the Goletta, where I landed, and sent to our vice-consul, who, after some difficulty, owing to the port regulations, came to see me, and tried to pass me through the gates, but did not succeed. He promised to get two vessels ready, as unfortu-

nately there were no steamers here at the time of our arrival. In one I meant to have sent Mr. Larcom to Galita, and the other I intended to take to the wreck.

“*Friday, December 24th.*—At daylight, when the gates opened, I entered a carriage, and drove up to our consul-general, who ordered his agent to forward my views in every way, sending his son to hurry matters, whilst he communicated with the Bey, who ordered his squadron to sea.

“Whilst my boat was preparing (a Maltese speronara, with a crew of twelve men, selected for their knowledge of the coast), I wrote two letters—one to Malta and the other to Lisbon—stating the loss of the ship. Not having slept for four nights, and being thoroughly tired, would account for the vague statement I sent. I then breakfasted, and started about 2 P.M., having put on board such provisions as my hurried departure admitted of—tea, coffee, biscuits, and spirits—in case I should be fortunate enough to save anybody.

“*Saturday, December 25th.*—On my passage, and at daylight on Sunday I was close to the spot where the *Avenger* was wrecked, although there was no broken or discoloured water to mark it. I cruised about till satisfied she had either broken up or sunk. While here I saw two steamers (*Lavoisier* and *Pasha*) come up and cruise about Galita, together with a merchant ship, and a gunboat of the Bey. With the last I communicated, asking her officers to take me to Galita, which I wished to examine personally, as also to speak the steamers,—my own crew, with whom I had great trouble, refusing to do so. They declined; whereupon I asked them to take half my crew out, and lend me two men, to which request I also received a negative; so I returned to Tunis, arriving at about 1 A.M. on the morning of Tuesday, December 28th. Sir Thomas Reade took all to his house, and made it a home for

us. I went on board the French steamer *Lavoisier* to thank the captain for his assistance, and also waited on the governor for the same purpose."

It afterwards appeared that the *Avenger* had struck on a couple of rocks named the *Sorelles*, or "Sisters," which lie about a hundred and sixty feet from each other, and are separated by a channel of a medium depth of thirty-nine to forty-nine feet. They are situated in $37^{\circ} 24'$ N. latitude, and $8^{\circ} 36' 45''$ E. longitude,—about 17 miles west of Galita. and 27 miles north-east of Cape Roux.

XXXIV.

LOSS OF THE "FORTH."

January 13, 1849.



THE *Forth* was one of the magnificent steamships belonging to the Royal Mail Steam-Packet Company, who run their vessels between England and the West Indies. Her burden was 1900 tons. Under the command of Captain Sturdee, an officer of reputation, of acknowledged skill and great experience, she left Southampton for her seventeenth voyage on the 2nd of September 1848. The voyage to Jamaica was successfully accomplished, and after taking on board fresh passengers, including Lieutenant Molesworth, R.N., she continued her western course; and on the 13th of January approached the low and unhealthy coast of Campeachy. As she was then in dangerous waters, and not more than a hundred miles from the scene of the wreck of the *Tweed* in 1846, Captain Sturdee now redoubled his vigilance, and ordered her head to be kept to the northward, so as to clear the Alacrane Rocks.

Lieutenant Molesworth's narrative of the incidents that afterwards occurred is full of interest, and we shall freely draw upon it:—

"At eleven o'clock" on the 13th, he says, "I retired to my berth. How long I had slept I could not tell, when I

was suddenly awoke by a slight bump, then another, and again by a most awful crash. The first two clearly told me what was the matter ; indeed, I could not have been long in suspense, for people were rushing about the deck exclaiming, ‘ Lost, lost ! we are all lost ! ’ I got out of bed, and put on as many things as I could find in the dark.

“ The crashes now became fearful, and the vessel seemed to be going to pieces fast. As I was springing on deck, I heard cries : ‘ Stand clear of the mast,—she is breaking up ! ’ and such-like sounds. At this moment I remembered my watch ; I therefore returned to the cabin, and placing it round my neck, hastened on deck. I was about the last up, and found most of the people in their night-dresses, clinging to the masts, ropes, and sides of the vessel, some crying, others praying.

“ Never shall I forget that scene.

“ The ship now swung from side to side, the decks working and the timbers breaking. It was perfectly impossible to stand on deck. On looking round, a frightful scene presented itself : nothing, as far as the eye could see, but a ridge of breakers ; no land anywhere. The rock through her bottom into the engine-room soon put an end to the order issued by the captain of ‘ Turn her head full power ! ’ which I could see was useless. The engines stopped of themselves, the water ran out at the bottom of the boiler, and the sea rising inside soon put out the fires ; so there we lay powerless as a log in the midst of the breakers, on the top of the rocks, the sea every now and then lifting her, and then sending her down with renewed force and a heavy crash on the rocks again.”

It was sad to see the decks opening and shutting, to hear the passengers frantically imploring God to help them and forgive them ;—mothers clasping their children, and husbands

and wives bidding each other a last farewell. All supposed that not a chance of safety remained, for the nearest shore was distant fully seventy miles.

Lieutenant Molesworth went up to the captain, and both agreed that the state of affairs was desperate. The former said he should go down to the cabin, and collect a few things which might be useful if they got clear of the rocks. "Mind what you are about," said the captain; "for I expect she will go to pieces directly." However, the lieutenant retired to his cabin; calmly struck a light; and opening his desk, took out everything not too heavy to carry about his person. Then he went again upon deck, where he found everything much as he had left it, except that the paddle-box boat had been safely launched. Thereupon he endeavoured to encourage the ladies and passengers with the assurance that there was no immediate danger. He urged them not to yield to despair, and contrived to get some of them aft out of the way of the main-mast, which threatened to come down by the run. In doing this, he experienced many heavy thumps on the deck. He then pointed out to the captain the necessity of embarking some of the people on board the boats; and the command of the large boat was intrusted to himself. But to get the ladies into a boat which at one moment lay twenty feet below the bulwarks, and the next moment was on a level with them, presented a very formidable difficulty. However, a stout rope was made fast to the deck, and then, taking a lady round the waist with one arm, and with the other clinging to the rope, the lieutenant swung himself from the ship into the boat alongside. In this way he put every lady in the ship, besides four children, into the boat without the slightest injury.

Next came his friend Mr. ———, who, he says, from fear and infirmity, had lost all his self-possession. He weighed

WRECK OF THE "FORTH."



about thirteen stone, and could not get into the boat. So the lieutenant said, "Take hold of me, and hold on, and do as I tell you;" whereupon his friend clasped him tightly round the neck with both arms. "Jump when I tell you;" and jump he did, "with a vengeance," for he took a spring that might have cleared the boat altogether, "and," says Mr. Molesworth, "as I could not well bear my own weight and his, we came down about ten feet together into the boat. Fortunately for him I was underneath, and he has since told me that he never went more comfortably into a boat in all his life!"

The lieutenant now took command of the boat; but finding a great lack of rope and other necessities, which he knew it would be useless for him to ask any one to procure, he again jumped on deck, and proceeded to collect various articles that he thought might be of use.

Once more he got into the boat, and made preparations to haul round the ship's bow to seaward, though, had the attempt been made, many lives must have been sacrificed, as he was intending to force the passage of the reef. Fortunately, just as they were starting, a small boat drifted partly into the breakers, and was turned over and over, and the bare rocks could be discovered after the wave broke.

The passengers in the lieutenant's boat were sadly alarmed, and the captain ordered him not to go on.

A small vessel was now discovered, and hailed with three cheers by the despairing passengers; but it was impossible to tell whether she was approaching or standing from them. Guns of distress were fired to attract her attention, but still she seemed to be bearing away. The lieutenant, therefore, left his boat, and said to the captain, "Why not try the reef? The wind is increasing and the sea getting heavier; and, if the worst come to the worst, our only chance must be the

reef. I will volunteer it in a boat, and if I succeed I will go for assistance to the vessel."

The captain answered: "If you attempt it you will be dashed to pieces; for no boat can live in such a sea, and the rocks are hardly under water."

The lieutenant said that he was willing to try, if he might be permitted to call for volunteers; and after a little hesitation, the captain gave his consent. Four volunteers were speedily obtained; for English seamen never flinch from confronting danger when a bold leader offers. The lieutenant swung himself into a small boat, followed by his men; bade the people "Good-bye;" and then, with a loud hurrah, dashed into the din and foam of the breakers.

Wave after wave rushed upon the adventurous skiff, but the men pulled steadily on: they had cleared the worst, when the boat grounded on a rock; up came a tremendous billow, threatening to swamp them; but she fortunately rose a little, and one good hearty stroke sent them ahead.

The sea broke just astern, and as it struck on the lieutenant's back its full force did not come into the boat; only a little water was shipped, and in three more pulls they were clear of the breakers altogether, whereupon all the people on board the wreck gave three hearty cheers.

The lieutenant now pulled for the vessel, but finding they did not near her much, rigged up a sail on one of the oars, and away they went most gloriously. In about an hour he discovered three small boats under sail: they turned out to be canoes. He ran towards them, and getting into one of the canoes, put one of their men into the boat and sent them for assistance, while he returned to the wreck with the welcome information, obtained from the Spaniards in the canoes, that an island lay not more than eight miles from the wreck, and consequently easy of access.

On returning to the *Forth*, the lieutenant found that all the boats had crossed the surf, but there were still some hands on board. Therefore he told the Spaniards they must cross; but at first they refused to do so. After a while they made an effort, and had just got into the middle of the breakers when a heavy sea poured into the boat, and nearly filled her. The next following close after, broke completely over them, and washed the lieutenant out of the boat, turning him head over heels; but somehow he contrived to get hold of the boat, and clung to her, and was at length thrown inside the breakers, where, standing on some rocks, his men bailed out the skiff, made another effort, and pulled clear of the breakers.

After collecting a few articles of his own, and some belonging to the passengers, he recrossed the reef to fetch the paddle-box boat, and taking command of her, brought her off in safety to the ship. He then proceeded to get together everything he possibly could for the comfort of the people on the little island of Perez, and having loaded the boats until they were deep in the water, he pulled away from the wreck, and accomplished the return voyage in safety.

The total number on the island, passengers and crew, was one hundred and thirty-six, of whom only two were slightly injured. Not a life was lost. A small brigantine was afterwards secured, which removed from the wreck a large quantity of luggage, and, on the 18th, conveyed them all to Campeachy; their happy escape being due, in a large measure, to the courage and presence of mind of Lieutenant Molesworth.

XXXV.

LOSS OF THE "AMAZON."

January 1852.



THE *Amazon*, at the time she was launched, bore the reputation of being the largest timber-built steamship in England. She was 300 feet long, her breadth was 41 feet, her burden 2256 tons, and her engines of 800 horse-power. Constructed for the West Indian trade, and belonging to the Royal Mail Steam-Packet Company, she was equipped in the most complete and luxurious style; her crew was mostly composed of picked men; her officers were selected for their ability and skill; and her commander, Captain Symons, was widely famous for his courage, presence of mind, and experience.

On Friday afternoon, January 2nd, 1852, this splendid vessel sailed from Southampton under the most favourable auspices. She had on board the West India mails and a valuable cargo. Her officers and crew numbered a hundred and ten men, and her passengers about fifty. Among the latter was Major Eliot Warburton, the eminent author and traveller, whose reputation will long be kept alive by his "*Hochelaga*" and "*The Crescent and the Cross*."

The first day or two after a ship puts out to sea is always occupied in clearing the decks, stowing away stores and bag-

gage, and generally making things all "snug" and "taut." Such was the case on board the *Amazon*; but the usual course was nevertheless interrupted to some extent by the alarm felt by many passengers on the score of fire. It was observed that the engines, which were new, became greatly heated by their own working, and that, in order to cool them, the captain or chief engineer continually stopped them. We are told that the alarm of a Mr. Neilson, one of the passengers, was so great, that he could not be persuaded to go below until after midnight; and another survivor, Mr. Glennie, asserts that the same apprehension was entertained by the crew. To a certain extent the captain succeeded in tranquilizing the fears of the timid; but there were many who did not scruple to assert that the machinery was not safe, and that the captain would act wisely in returning to Southampton.

The *Amazon* had not been thirty-six hours at sea before the disaster took place which had been so generally anticipated. At a quarter before one o'clock on Sunday morning, as she steamed into the Bay of Biscay against a violent headwind, the alarm of fire was given. Mr. Trewelke, the second officer, who was in charge of the watch, while standing on the paddle-box bridge discovered flames breaking forth in the vicinity of the engine-room. He immediately despatched Dunsford, the quartermaster, to summon the captain. Unfortunately, Dunsford made no attempt to conceal his errand, and the passengers took the alarm. Captain Symons rushed on deck, half-clothed, and attempted to get the fire under; but perceiving that the calamity was of a very serious character, he ran back to his cabin, dressed, and returned immediately. But the fire had been discovered by others. Stone, the fourth engineer, gave the alarm, and made an effort to go below and stop the engines, but was prevented by the clouds

of stifling smoke. Then the men endeavoured to drag forward the hose ; but the flames surged up through the oil and tallow store-room, and the hose had to be abandoned, while those who were handling it retired to the spar or upper deck. All the passengers were now aware of the catastrophe, and dashing open the saloon door, they rushed upon deck ; while, almost simultaneously, the men were compelled to abandon the engine-room, which the flames and smoke converted into one huge furnace.

The reader will easily imagine that, under these dread circumstances, all was horror, confusion, and despair. The flames, having broken out just behind the fore-mast, rapidly swept across the entire breadth of the ship, forming a rampart of fire as high as the paddle-boxes ; so that all communication was cut off between the officers, who were aft, and the greater portion of the crew, who were in the fore-castle. It is true that a few of the sailors contrived to cross the flaming barrier by creeping up the paddle-box, and sliding down on the other side ; but this was the only means of access, and it was so dangerous that but a very small number ventured to essay it, though all must have known that the sole chance of safety lay in the boats, which were stowed in the after part of the ship. It would be needless here to tell of the screams and shrieks of the panic-stricken passengers, mixed with the cries of the animals on board ; of the wild anguish with which they saw before them only a choice of deaths, and both almost equally dreadful—the raging flame or the raging sea ; and of those fearful moments when all self-control, all presence of mind, appeared to be lost, and no authority was recognized, no command obeyed.

Every effort was made to prevent the flames from extending aft. The *Amazon* had nine boats on board—and four of these were life-boats—capable of containing the whole of the

passengers and crew, if they could have been safely lowered. But this was impossible so long as the steamer sped through the water at the rate of thirteen miles an hour. It was equally impossible to turn off the steam and stop her, for no man could descend into the burning engine-room and live. The captain probably hoped that the vessel would be arrested in her headlong course by the exhaustion of the boilers ; not knowing that one of the engineers, at the first alarm of fire, and to prevent explosion, had turned on the feeding-pipe from the cistern, so as to maintain a continuous supply. He ordered the boats to be kept fast until he should command them to be lowered, and cheered the men in their strenuous exertions to save the ship.

But of all man's slaves which occasionally become his masters, Fire, when it throws off its subjection, is the most tyrannical ; and on board the *Amazon* it refused to check its fury. So, as the ship sped onward, and the flames waxed ever stronger, and the chances of safety were diminished, the cry broke out, “ Every man for himself ! ” The captain hurriedly issued orders to lower the forward life-boats ; but it was too late. They too were on fire ! When this was discovered, all order and discipline seemed to disappear immediately, and instead of fortitude and resolution, a selfish desire for preservation entered almost every breast. Not, indeed, that men worthy of Old England were wholly wanting in this terrible crisis ; for many of the crew and passengers still expressed themselves willing to obey the orders of the captain and Mr. Roberts, his chief officer.

Endeavours were made by different groups, says a recent writer, to get the boats into the water ; and now were seen, in horribly fatal light, the consequences of adopting an innovation upon established practices without using necessary precautions. The boats of the *Amazon* were not only sus-

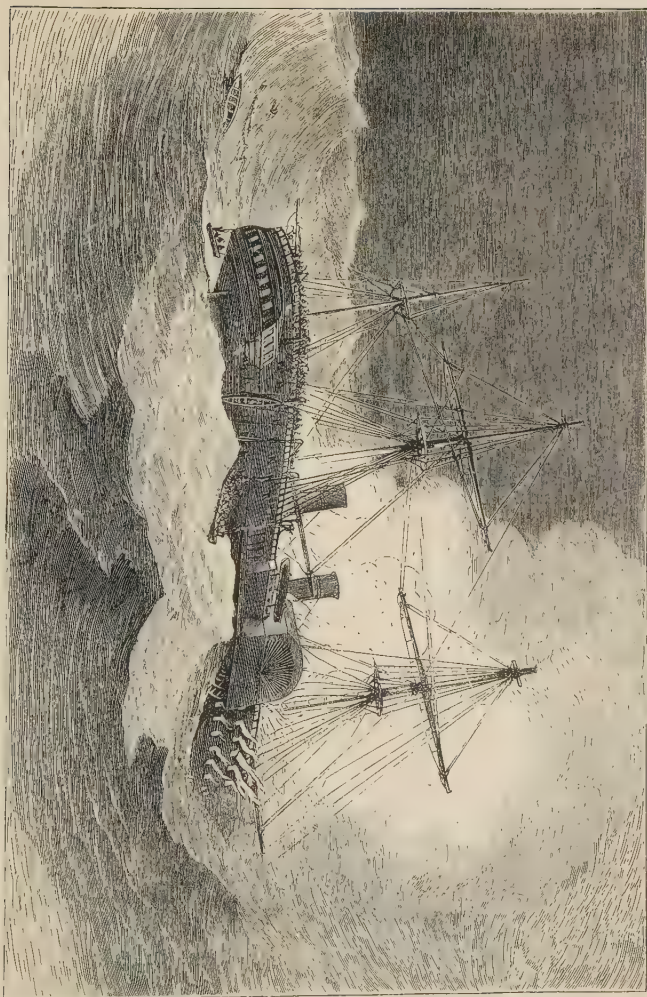
pended from the davits as usual, but had their keels grasped in projecting iron cradles to prevent them from swinging. It does not seem that any on board were aware of this new device; and in the darkness on one side, and the fire-glare on the other, it was not recognized until, through the ignorance of those who handled the tackling, several boat-loads of poor wretches had been capsized into the raging sea, and had perished. One man, D. Brown, lowered three boats successively, whose occupants, we need hardly say, were all drowned.

The captain and Mr. Roberts assisted in lowering the boats, but made no attempt to secure their own safety. When he could do no more, Captain Symons went aft, and took the wheel out of the steersman's hands; and at this post of duty he probably perished.

We are told—and, indeed, the dullest imagination can easily conjecture—that the most pathetic and heart-rending scenes occurred amongst those who abandoned all hope of escape. One gentleman was observed pacing the deck with his hands folded in prayer. A gentleman and lady, in night-dresses only, with their arms clasped round each other, walked deliberately to the open hatchways, and flung themselves into the fiery abyss beneath. A young lady, in her night-robe, having that and her feet severely burned, was three times placed in one of the boats, but, from a false feeling of modesty—like that of Virginia in Bernardin de Saint-Pierre's celebrated romance—insisted on returning to the vessel, where she ultimately perished. A poor wretch, all on fire, was seen rolling on the deck in a wild effort to release himself from the closely-clinging flames; and from another, who was literally roasted by the terrible heat, the skin fell away in ribbons.

When the speed of the vessel had somewhat abated, a fresh attempt was made to lower the boats, and it is believed

BURNING OF THE "AMAZON"



that five in all got safely away. The first which disentangled herself from the burning wreck was the starboard life-boat, carrying Mr. Neilson and fifteen other persons. They were scarcely afloat when they were hailed by the dingey, which had left the ship about the same time, but was fast filling with water. Mr. Vincent, midshipman of the *Amazon*, and four others, were in her, and were bailing with a pair of boots from which the tops had been cut off. These five unfortunates were received into the life-boat, and the dingey was taken in tow. The life-boat then pulled back to the flaming wreck, in the hope of saving more lives; but the wind had risen to a gale, and the dingey, driving up against the stern of the boat, drove in her timbers, and carried away the rudder. In this condition, it was useless to think of making any attempt at rescue.

For three hours the gale continued, and all that could be done was so to trim the rudderless boat as to keep her head to the wind, and save her from being swamped. Those on board her saw the masts of the *Amazon* give way one after another, as she drifted, a shapeless mass of smoke and flame, before the wind. Nearly at the same time, an outward-bound bark passed within three or four hundred yards of the boat, and being hailed by the crew, answered with signals; but instead of bearing down to their rescue, she cruelly continued her course. About four o'clock the rain descended heavily, and the wind subsided. The life-boat followed the moving mass of flame, until the magazine exploded: shortly afterwards her funnels went over the side, and the *Amazon* ceased to be.

The crew of the life-boat now pulled in the direction of the French coast, in order to make the land as quickly as possible, in case they did not fall in with a passing vessel. This course they continued all night. The morning came with

sunshine and a radiant sky, and about three hours later the man on the look-out descried a sail. She proved to be the *Marsden* brig, outward-bound, and in two hours they came up with her. Captain Evans, her master, welcomed them with a cordial greeting; and being prevented by the shifting of the wind from landing them on the coast of France, he bore away for England, and disembarked them at Plymouth shortly after midnight on Tuesday.

Another boat which escaped was the pinnace. When first lowered, the boat dropped at one end, owing to the fouling of the tackle, and most of her occupants were cast into the sea and drowned. A few climbed back into the burning ship; while a lady, Mrs. M'Lennan, with a child of eighteen months in her arms, clung fast to the seat until the boat was righted, and being again filled with fugitives, got clear off. The pinnace carried sixteen persons in all. From the narrative of one of them, a Mr. Glennie, we borrow the following details:—

“Immediately on clearing away from the ship we drifted astern very rapidly; so much so, that I imagine the ship must have been going about eight or nine knots. It was blowing fresh; the sea was running high, and we were at first in much danger of being swamped; more, however, in consequence of our own confusion than from any extraordinary violence of the waves. But one of the sailors—a fine fellow, named Berryman, a man-of-war's man, who had never been in a steamer before—advised that we should throw a spar by a rope astern, that might serve as a breakwater. This we did; and what was better still, we soon got into some kind of order.....Our boat was a small one, and would hardly have held more in such a sea with safety. While this was going on, I remember to have got a view of the larboard

side of the steamer, and observed that a large hole was burnt out of her side immediately abaft the paddle-box, part of which also was burnt. The hole was nearly down to the water's edge, and through it I could see the machinery.....I remember to have seen some people still on the after part of the deck, and amongst them I thought I could yet distinguish the captain and Mr. Warburton; and my impression was that they still possessed the means of escape from the burning wreck.....With the view of steadying our boat, and being enabled to steer her well before the wind, we hoisted Mrs. M'Lennan's shawl on a couple of boat-hooks for a sail, one of the sailors giving her a blanket in exchange.....By the time that we got our sail up, or, I should think, from twenty to twenty-five minutes after leaving the ship, the *Amazon* was in a blaze from stem to stern. The only people that I remember to have seen upon her at that moment were some three or four on the bowsprit."

At dawn, the party in the pinnace, who, drenched with water and half-clothed, had passed a miserable night, found that their frail craft was leaking faster than they could bail her out, and accordingly gave themselves up for lost. Happily, Stone, one of the engineers, discovered the leak, and contrived partly to stop it. Thereupon they steered for the French coast, the men plying their oars lustily, and Mrs. M'Lennan, as she lay in the stern-sheets, cheering them to their work. At noon they saw a sail in the distance, and signalled it with the lady's shawl, labouring meanwhile with all their might to come up with her. In this they succeeded at about six o'clock in the evening, and being safely lifted on board, were received with the greatest kindness both by the captain and crew. She proved to be a Dutch galliot, the *Gertruda*, Captain Tunleiter. He immediately made sail for Brest, the nearest port, and at Mr. Glennie's request kept a

sharp look-out for any other fugitives. At daylight he picked up a boat from the *Amazon*, with eight persons on board, including a Miss Smith. Their adventures had not been less exciting than those of the castaways in the pinnace.

The *Gertruda* reached Brest in safety; and the shipwrecked party so happily rescued, after obtaining some much needed repose, proceeded to Havre, whence they sailed for Southampton in the *Grand Turk*.

For some days it was supposed in England that the boats above mentioned contained all the survivors of the miserable catastrophe. But on the 15th of January tidings were received that the after-port life-boat of the *Amazon*, containing thirteen persons, had been picked up by a Dutch galliot, and that the rescued had landed safely at Plymouth.

"This boat had been safely lowered from the *Amazon*, though not until the stewardess had fallen out of her and been drowned, about one o'clock. Lieutenant Grylls, of the royal navy, who, though but a passenger in the *Amazon*, had ably seconded Captain Symons in his endeavours to clear the boats, had assisted in getting her afloat, and took the command of her when she got away. No sooner had she left the ship than it was found that she was filling with water, a large hole being stove in her larboard bow. Fox, a stoker, stopped the hole by taking off his drawers and cramming them into it, keeping them in position for three or four hours by the pressure of his own body; and when seized with violent cramps, being relieved by Durdney and Wall. The boat had to be constantly bailed during the night. About three o'clock a bark passed between them and the burning ship, almost within hail, but passed by without noticing them. In the morning they passed over the place where the vessel had sunk, and saw large pieces of the wreck, chests and boxes,

and the like, but no person living or dead. About one o'clock on Sunday, Lieutenant Grylls descried a sail, and having no oars, they broke up the boat's bottom boards, and used them as paddles. The sail tacked and stood away ; but soon afterwards they saw another vessel in the same direction, and by great exertions they came up with her about four in the afternoon. She was a Dutch galliot from Amsterdam, bound for Leghorn ; and the captain and crew behaved most hospitably to the castaways. Shaping his course for Plymouth, the commander of the galliot, when off that port, transferred his shipwrecked guests to the *Royal Charlotte* revenue cutter, from which they landed safely in the town."

Of the whole number of persons on board the *Amazon*—namely, one hundred and sixty-two—fifty-eight only were saved ; one hundred and four perishing by flood or fire.

The cause of the calamity would seem to have been the imperfect working of the new machinery, which had not undergone the usual test-trials before the vessel left port. Then, again, the crew were strangers to one another, and had not had time to learn to act in concert. The rapid spread of the fire was due in some measure to the inflammable nature of the timber of which the vessel was built—Dantzic pine, teak, and oak ; the former being a wood very easily ignited. But the true *origo mali* is to be found in the unwise haste with which the *Amazon* was despatched on her first—and last—voyage.

XXXVI.

LOSS OF THE "BIRKENHEAD."

February 1852.



THE steady discipline and inflexible fortitude of British soldiers were never more conspicuously displayed than on the occasion of the loss of the troop-ship *Birkenhead*.

Towards the close of 1851 she sailed from the Cove of Cork, under the command of Captain Salmond, for the Cape of Good Hope, having on board a large number of soldiers, intended to fill up vacancies in the colonial army, with the usual proportion of wives and children. Lieutenant-Colonel Seton, of the 78th Highlanders, was in charge of this military force.

At the very outset evil omens attended the voyage of the *Birkenhead*. She was buffeted by incessant winds during her passage from the Cove of Cork to the Bay of Biscay. However, she arrived safely at Simon's Bay, Cape of Good Hope, on the 23rd of February 1852, where she received despatches from the Governor of the Cape, Sir Henry Smith, ordering that the troops should be landed at Algoa Bay and Buffalo River. Accordingly, on the 25th, the *Birkenhead* steamed away from her anchorage; the night being calm, clear, and windless, and the land not more than three or four miles dis-

tant, so that the fires burning on the long line of low, blue hills which skirt the shore served as so many beacons to direct the vessel's course.

Unfortunately a heavy swell from the sea had set inland, and a terrible disaster awaited the good ship, of which none on board of her had the slightest presentiment. Suddenly, about two in the morning of the 25th of February, a tremendous shock crashed through the vessel from stem to stern. The stillness of the night and the calm of the sparkling waves had probably lulled to some extent the watchfulness of those in charge of the ship, which had struck upon one of the hidden rocks abundant in those seas,—a broken, rugged rock, something like the jagged summit of a granite mountain, surrounded by water “fathoms deep.” A huge rent had been torn by the splintered pinnacles of this rock in the port-side of the *Birkenhead*, under water, and just in front of one of the paddle-wheels. Then came the clashing of riven timber and the rushing of waters; and those on board seemed at once and instinctively to feel that all was lost.

The vessel began to fill. All available hands were ordered up to lower the boats, the men replying to the call with admirable promptitude and self-possession. Two cutters and a gig were successfully got out; but all attempts to lower the paddle-box boats proved useless, the pins of the davits having rusted and become immovable. Meantime the ship ground and grated against the rocks. The chain-pumps in the after cock-pit were plied by vigorous hands. The troop-horses and all other *impedimenta* were thrown overboard. Preparations for the embarkation of the women and children, who were placed on board the second cutter, were made under the guidance of Mr. Richards; and when completed, the cutter put out seawards, as foaming and roaring breakers forbade any approach to the shore. Colonel Seton then summoned his

officers to a consultation, and impressed upon them the necessity of composure, and of preserving discipline among their men to the very last.

The *Birkenhead* at this moment parted asunder in front of the engines, the fore part of the deck immediately sinking, with several sufferers clinging to its bursting planks. There was now no hope of escape ; and the word was sent round that all must do their best for their individual safety. The cutter and gig, both manned, lay off the ship ; and on the captain's order being made known, several men jumped overboard and swam towards them—Captain Salmond preserving his usual calmness, and standing on the poop in an attitude as cool and collected as if he still commanded a gallant ship instead of a battered wreck. Order and discipline reigned on board : soldiers and seamen, all were steady, quiet, resolute. Colonel Seton himself, with his drawn sword in his hand, stood in the gangway, to prevent any from endeavouring to force their way into the boat appropriated to the women and children.

The gunner, by the captain's directions, sent up blue lights and rockets from various parts of the ship ; but all in vain. He was unable to fire any signals of distress, the powder-magazine being under water. The wreck meanwhile was fast going to pieces ; and from its shattered condition, and the unavoidable confusion which prevailed, it was impossible to launch either the pinnace or the large "boom-boat" in the vessel's centre. As we have said, for the hundreds of men on board the *Birkenhead*, only two cutters and a gig, and these small boats, were available.

The ship having settled down by the bow, the only place where a temporary safety could be obtained was the poop ; and there officers, soldiers, and sailors collected in groups, watching intently for the catastrophe which they knew to be

LOSS OF THE "BIRKENHEAD."



close at hand. At length, as the rush of the waves drove them further upon the fatal rock, they could feel the broken ship sinking gradually and surely beneath their feet. Captain Salmond shouted, "Let all who can swim now try to save themselves!" A voice exclaimed, "Make for the boats!" but Colonel Seton and his officers entreated their men—and not in vain—not to attempt an entrance into the boats, which were already fully loaded with women and children.

"The officers," says Gilly, "now shook hands and took leave of one another; when, on a sudden, the vessel broke again crosswise abaft the main-mast, and the poop heeling over with a lurch, plunged beneath the water. The sea was instantly covered with a struggling mass of human beings, from amongst whom the strong and skilful swimmer alone had any chance of escape. The cries which then arose, the piercing shrieks, and the shoutings for help which no one could give, were awful. In little more than twenty minutes from the time when the vessel struck the rock, all that remained of the *Birkenhead* were a few spars, and some fragments of timber drifting upon the waves.

Captain Salmond and Colonel Seton were both observed in the water, and both perished. Sergeant Drake, of the Royal Marines, says he found himself in the water, and the captain close to him, swimming for a plank, when something (probably a falling spar) struck the captain on the head, and he went down.

Fortunately the main-topmast, with the yard-arm and part of the rigging, remained standing upright above the water, and afforded a place of refuge to the few men who succeeded in reaching it. Some of them were picked up by the first cutter; others contrived to get hold of pieces of wood, or to float by means of swimming-belts towards the nearest part of the land, about two miles distant, which was found to be

Point Danger, one of the southernmost headlands of Africa. Still, the number of those who gained the shore was, as may be supposed, comparatively small ; and the survivors had to fight their way through the most horrible and appalling perils. Lieutenant Girardot, of the 43rd Regiment, one of those who reached the shore, afterwards stated that "nearly all those that took to the water without their clothes on were taken by sharks. Hundreds of them were all around us, and I saw men taken by them quite close to me ; but as I was dressed (having on a flannel shirt and trousers), they preferred the others."

Those who escaped the sharks had other difficulties and dangers to contend with ; for not only was the shore rocky and the surf violent, but the rocks and shoals were so thickly overgrown with sea-weed that its meshes caught the weary swimmers as in a net.

Cornet Bond, of the 12th Lancers, relates his adventures in graphic terms. When the poop went down, sucking under water all those who were on board of it, Cornet Bond rose to the surface almost immediately. He wore one of Mackintosh's life-preservers, which can be filled with air in the water. This he did, and then struck out for the shore, which he succeeded in reaching at a little after 5 A.M. ; so that he was not less than three hours in the water, swimming all the time with the help of his belt. Two men floating by his side he saw disappear with a shriek, most probably bitten by sharks. Fortunately he hit upon the landing-place, but owing to the great quantity of sea-weed through which he had to struggle, he was so exhausted that he nearly failed in reaching it. He then walked up a kind of beaten track from the beach, in the hope of finding some habitation. In doing this, he discovered his horse upon the shore, up to his knees in water ; and immediately returning, he got him upon the dry land, and thenceforth was out of danger.

A raft with about nine men now made the land, while others battled through the surf on spars and pieces of wood. Captain Wright, of the 91st Regiment, with several others, landed on one of the sponsons which had separated from the ship, and formed a sort of raft; while others availed themselves of a paddle-box boat which had floated up, but was full of water. One of the ship's quartermasters said that seven men who were with him in that boat died from cold and exposure, being quite naked. He himself had kept his clothes on. Lieutenant Lucas, of the 73rd Regiment, one of the four officers who reached the shore, was severely injured on the rocks before he could effect a landing. In all, sixty-eight got ashore; but how many perished in the sea-weed, or were dashed to pieces among the breakers, none will ever know.

The sufferings of the survivors were very great, from cold, and prolonged immersion in the water, and subsequent exposure to the sun's rays. A soldier was rescued who had been drifting about on a piece of wood for eight and thirty hours. Nor, on their reaching the land, were all their trials at an end. The nearest habitation to the scene of the disaster at Point Danger appears to have been a poor fishing-station six or seven miles distant, which when reached could give them but little relief. Thence, bruised by the rocks, and their feet lacerated by thorny plants, they made their way, for some fourteen or fifteen miles, to the residence of Captain Smalls, formerly an officer of the 7th Dragoon Guards, by whom they were fed, clothed, and housed with the most cordial hospitality, until removed, about two days afterwards, by Her Majesty's steamer *Rhadamanthus*, commander, Bunce; which vessel the commodore despatched from Simon's Bay to rescue and relieve the survivors from the wreck. Captain Wright, the senior surviving military officer, having procured

a whale-boat and the assistance of some men, and being joined by the "field-cornet" and the magistrate of the district, occupied two days in exploring the coast, and burying such bodies—most of them frightfully mutilated—as the sea had given up.

We must now return to the three small boats which, under the charge of Mr. Richards, were lying at a short distance from the wreck. So soon as the *Birkenhead* sank, they threw the gear overboard to lighten the boats, and picked up several persons from the water, until the number they carried amounted in all to about seventy-eight. Thus loaded, the crew feared to attempt a landing on an unknown and surf-beaten coast, and pulled away in the direction of Simon's Town. After daylight a breeze sprang up, causing them some alarm; but a woman's shawl being spread on a boat-hook in the second cutter, it served at the same time as a sail and to steady the boat. While slowly progressing, they descried a coasting schooner bearing down towards them, which proved to be the *Lioness*, Thomas E. Ramsden, master. The sufferers were immediately taken on board this vessel, which then crowded on all canvas for the scene of the disaster.

Mrs. Ramsden, the master's wife, happening to be on board the *Lioness*, the women and children were supplied with clothes, and everything was done to make them comfortable. In like manner the master and his crew distributed their own spare clothes amongst the men, many of whom were almost naked, not having had time to dress before the water rushed into their berths.

It was past two o'clock in the afternoon when the *Lioness* arrived off Point Danger, and found the main-topmast of the unfortunate *Birkenhead* still rising erect above the water, with from forty to forty-five men, soldiers and sailors, cling-

ing to the rigging. These men were speedily transferred to the *Lioness*, which then steered for Simon's Bay. Here, soon after their arrival, they were joined by those whom the *Rhadamanthus* brought in. Truly, as Mr. Gilly observes, these survivors from the wreck of the *Birkenhead*

“ Were doomed at last
To tell as true a tale of danger past,
As ever the dark annals of the deep
Disclosed, for man to dread or woman weep.”

The total number on board the *Birkenhead* is computed to have been 631; of whom there were saved 193. The number who perished was 438.

It is satisfactory to relate that not one woman or child was lost.

“ It has been remarked, and justly, that some of our greatest battles have been won at a smaller sacrifice of life than this shipwreck entailed. But, admitting that similar disasters may have caused as great destruction, or even greater, the loss of the *Birkenhead* will ever be noted in the annals of remarkable shipwrecks for the cool determined courage displayed by all on board, and for the heroic readiness with which so many men faced death rather than endanger the lives of women and children.”

The following fine poem was written by the late Sir F. Hastings Doyle :—

Right on our flank the crimson sun went down,
The deep sea rolled around in dark repose,
When, like the wild shriek from some captured town,
A cry of women rose.

The stout ship *Birkenhead* lay hard and fast,
Caught, without hope, upon a hidden rock;
Her timbers thrilled as nerves, when through them passed
The spirit of that shock.

And ever, like base cowards who leave their ranks
In danger's hour, before the rush of steel,
Drifted away, disorderly, the planks,
From underneath her keel.

Confusion spread; for, though the coast seemed near,
Sharks hovered thick along that white sea-brink.
The boats could hold?—not all—and it was clear
She was about to sink.

"Out with those boats, and let us haste away,"
Cried one, "ere yet yon sea the bark devours."
The man thus clamouring was, I scarce need say,
No officer of ours.

We knew our duty better than to care
For such loose babblers, and made no reply;
Till our good colonel gave the word, and there
Formed us in line—to die.

There rose no murmur from the ranks, no thought
By shameful strength unhonoured life to seek;
Our post to quit we were not trained, nor taught
To trample down the weak.

So we made women with their children go.
The oars ply back again, and yet again;
Whilst, inch by inch, the drowning ship sank low,
Still under steadfast men.

What followed why recall? The brave who died,
Died without flinching in the bloody surf,
They sleep as well beneath that purple tide
As others under turf;—

They sleep as well! and, roused from their wild grave,
Wearing their wounds like stars, shall rise again,
Joint-heirs with Christ, because they bled to save
His weak ones, not in vain.

XXXVII.

LOSS OF THE "TAYLEUR."

January 1854.



THE *Tayleur*, a noble ship of 1800 tons, engaged in the Australian trade, sailed from Liverpool for Melbourne, on Thursday, the 19th of January 1854. She was commanded by Captain Noble.

Her crew, when she left the Mersey, numbered eighty; she carried four hundred and thirty-six adult passengers; and the number of those on board was made up to six hundred and twenty by ship servants, young persons, and children.

Soon after entering the Irish Channel she met with rough weather, and with alarming rapidity this increased to a violent gale. There was no reason, however, to apprehend any danger to a well-manned and well-found vessel, constructed according to the most approved principles of naval architecture. Yet from some cause which has not been accurately ascertained, but which, in all probability, was the defective condition of her compasses, the *Tayleur* was driven out of her course, and on Saturday morning was beating towards the Irish coast, off Lambay, a few miles north of Malahide. Neither the skill and experience of her captain, nor the exertions of her crew, could avert the impending

catastrophe. At twelve o'clock she drove full upon the rocks, under circumstances which have been very graphically described by one of the cabin passengers, whose life was saved.

About twelve o'clock, he says, a friend came down to my cabin, and said, "Land is close to us, and the officers are afraid the ship will go ashore." I proceeded on deck, when a horrible scene of confusion met my eye. Before us, at a short distance, rose the bleak and rocky island of Lambay, round the base of which the waves were dashing furiously; while the vessel, quite unmanageable in the hands of the crew, was drifting shoreward with fearful rapidity. The deck was crowded with passengers, male and female, who, perceiving their danger, were in a state of almost frantic terror. The captain attempted to wear the ship, but instead of "paying off," she continued to drift towards the rocks. He then ordered the stay-sail and spanker to be set, while the mate directed the man at the helm to keep her full. All was useless. Just at this moment I heard the chain running out with the anchor. The first mate called out, "Hold on!" but both anchors were let go: they snapped like glass. And now began a scene of the most frightful horror; some running below to collect what articles they could, others praying, some taking leave of their friends, wringing their hands, and beseeching them for help. The vessel, after striking, lay so close upon the rocks that several persons attempted to jump ashore. The first person who leaped on the island struck his head against the rocks, fell back into the water with his head frightfully cut, and, after struggling a short time, sank. The next person who jumped from the vessel made good his footing, and was followed by several others; I believe by the Chinese and Lascars belonging to the crew. These also suc-

ceeded in making good their landing, and as soon as they had done so, scampered with all haste up the rocks, never attempting to assist those on board.

Several now swung themselves on the rocks, which were but a few feet from us. I managed to swing myself on shore, and retained the rope in my hand: I passed the end of it up to some of those behind, and by this means a great many were enabled to come ashore.

To attempt to paint the heart-rending scene on board the ship would be impossible. Wives clinging to their husbands, children to their parents; women running wildly about the deck, uttering the most heart-rending cries; many offering all they possessed to persons to get them on shore.

Among the earliest of the females who attempted to escape from the wreck were some young Irishwomen. Most of them lost their hold of the rope, and fell into the sea. The doctor of the ship, a most noble fellow, struggled hard to save his wife and child. He had succeeded in getting about half-way to the shore on a rope, holding his child by its clothes in his teeth; but just then the ship lurched outwards, by which the rope was dragged from the hands of those who were stationed on the lower rocks, and was held only by those above, thus running him high in the air, so that the brave fellow could not drop on the rocks. Word was now given to lower the rope gently; but those who held it above let it go by the run, and the poor fellow, with his child, was buried in the waves. But in a short time he again appeared above the water, manfully battling with the waves and the portions of the wreck that now floated about him.

At length he swam to a ladder that was hanging by a rope alongside the ship, and got upon it. After he had been there a minute or two, a female floated close to him; he immediately took hold of her on the ladder, tenderly parted the hair from

her face, and appeared to be encouraging her; but in another minute she was washed from his hold, and sank almost immediately. He then got up again into the ship, and tried to get his wife on shore; but they both perished. He deserved a better fate.

The scene was now most truly awful. The wretched passengers made the most desperate struggles for life; numbers of women jumped overboard in the vain hope of reaching land; and the ropes were crowded by hundreds who, in their eagerness, terror, and confusion, frustrated each other's efforts for self-preservation.

Many of the females would get half-way, and then, through weakness and terror, be unable to proceed further; and after clinging to the rope for a short time, would be forced from their hold by those who came after them. Three women only, out of two hundred, were saved. One of these had accomplished part of her perilous journey, then stopped, and hung for some time by her two hands over the foaming waves; her husband then came on the rope, and managed to assist her to the shore. They had children tied to their backs. Of the whole number who fell into the water, not above five were saved. I saw one fine girl who, after falling from the rope, managed to seize hold of another which was hanging from the side of the ship, and to which she clung for more than a quarter of an hour, the sea every moment dashing her against the side of the ship; but it was not possible to render her any assistance. Some one got a spar out, by which means several got on shore; but it soon broke, and hundreds might then be seen hanging to the bulwarks of the ship, each struggling to reach the land.

I saw, says our authority, one young woman hanging on the middle of the rope for some time by her two hands; but those pushing towards the shore soon sent her to her doom.

The ship's stern now began to sink. She made a lurch, and all the ropes were snapped asunder. The scene was most harrowing! Every wave washed off scores at a time; we could see them struggle for a moment, and all, except two who were in the rigging, were gone.

The coast-guard, having been apprised of the wreck, now came up; but all they could do was to attempt to save the two poor creatures in the rigging. They managed to get a line to one of them, by fastening two lines, at the end of each of which was a piece of wood, to a single rope, and guiding it from the rock to the spot where the poor fellow was, so that he could reach it; then they dragged him ashore. A fine young man in the top they could not succour, and when he saw them going away his agonizing cries moved every heart. But about two o'clock the next morning the coast-guard contrived to rescue him, after he had been on the top full fourteen hours. Who shall describe his joy at his deliverance!

We found we were on Lambay Island, three miles from Rush, and thirteen miles from Dublin. The steward of Lord Talbot, whose property the island is, threw open the house, which they call a castle, for us, as also did the coast-guard. Here you could see some limping with their legs sprained, others without shoes or stockings; here one with nothing but his shirt, there another with nothing but his trousers. The first day, I had neither shoes nor stockings. We were served with oatmeal and potatoes, and a pig was killed for us.

We managed to make a hearty meal at the house of the coast-guard'sman where we were staying, and beds were made for us in all the rooms by spreading straw on the floor. We were almost starved with cold. The night was dreadful, and we were many of us almost naked, and wet through; in this state we lay all night. The next day was worse than the day

before. When we went out to the wreck, we found the bodies were lying piled one over another, most of them almost naked, and several persons were getting all they could from the dead bodies. It was enough to make the stoutest heart shudder. One poor female was lying on the deck, naked all but her stays, totally uncovered. In this state she was left. The coast-guard said the men who saved the things had a right to them. The captain said he had nothing to do with it. About six o'clock we were told that a steamer was in sight. Through the day, I offered anything if they would put me across to Rush, as I wished to telegraph home that we were safe, before the news of the wreck arrived; but, for some reason, they appeared to wish to keep us all on the island in our wretched condition. God grant that we may never witness such a scene again.

There can be little doubt that this terrible catastrophe might have been prevented. The verdict of the coroner's jury impanelled to inquire into the deaths of so many human beings, justly attributed them to "the highly culpable neglect of the owners, in permitting the vessel to leave the port without compasses properly adjusted, or a sufficient trial having taken place to learn whether she was under the control of her helm or not."

XXXVIII.

WRECK OF THE "HENRI IV." AND THE "PLUTO."

November 13, 1854.



URING the night of the 13th of November 1854, the admirals in command of the British and French fleets before Sebastopol were alarmed by unmistakable indications of the approach of a violent tempest. They signalled to the numerous vessels under their charge to take the necessary precautions. On the morning of the 14th, a terrible gale from the south-west broke out, and raising a heavy sea, endangered the safety of the immense armament scattered over the waters of the Black Sea. The wind, occasionally subsiding, always returned with greater violence than before, accompanied by showers of hail and snow. When the sky sometimes cleared, nothing but disasters were visible, whether in the roadstead of Katcha, which lay open to the storm, or in the ports of Kamiesh and Balaklava. A large number of vessels, especially of transports and trading-ships, had been driven ashore, and the beach was strewn with dead bodies, casks, spars, and other sad signs of a dreadful catastrophe. Nearly all the war-ships had suffered severe damage, had broken their cables, shattered their rudders, and were saved from imminent destruction only

by the sudden termination of the furious hurricane against which they had contended for four-and-twenty hours. Out at sea, vessels foundered, or when caught by the tempest, escaped ruin only by the most strenuous exertions on the part of their crews. The steam-frigate *Le Sané*, which was employed in carrying Russian prisoners and the French wounded to Constantinople, was so tossed and shaken by the sea, that a 30-pounder cannon, secured on the forecastle, was carried, in two of the vessel's rollings, clean over the bulwarks, with all its fastenings and tackle.

At Eupatoria, where the roadstead presented a truly gloomy spectacle, fifteen transports, French and English, were thrown ashore, affording a splendid booty, as at Katcha, to greedy bands of Cossack marauders. The French navy, on this occasion, lost two fine vessels, the *Henri IV.* and the *Pluto*, notwithstanding the skill of their captains, and the courage and discipline of their crews. The circumstances under which they perished are thus related by the commander of the *Henri IV.* in a report addressed to Admiral Hamelin, commander-in-chief of the French fleet :—

“I have the pain to inform you that my ship has been driven ashore, at twenty miles to the south of Eupatoria, and that I have no hope of getting her off, considering the time of year.

“This melancholy event is owing to the successive breaking of my four anchors during the storm we have just experienced, and which, though now less violent, is blowing while I write.

“Every precaution had been taken which prudence suggested. The cable of the port-anchor, which was the one exposed to the winds from the open, ran out one hundred and twenty fathoms with a depth of eight fathoms water, and I had also moored my vessel in the direction of north to south.

Further, each time that it blew a little fresh, I let go my stay starboard-anchor, which was my best. This I did not fail to do yesterday, on seeing the nasty appearance of the weather. Afterwards I struck my topmasts, brought down my lower yards, and ran out a second stay-anchor, so that I was riding with four anchors,—that is, with all I possessed, for I had lost one at Baltschik, owing to the snapping of the cable, and another had been broken by a cannon-ball in the engagement of the 17th of October.

“I thought myself perfectly secure with these four strong anchors, when, in a very violent gust and sudden shift of the wind, the starboard cable broke clean off at the carriage of the bit. At eleven o’clock, that on the port-side, which had often dragged, link by link, in spite of wedge and stopper, and had run out fully one hundred and fifty fathoms, followed its example. We then looked to the fastenings of the stay port-anchor, of which the lever of the stopper broke; but the chain having formed a knot at the bottom of the well, it held stoutly at one hundred and twenty-six fathoms until ten minutes past five, when it went, with a violent crash. The larboard-anchor being left alone did not hold a single minute, and it was with terror I felt the double shock which told me that all hope of contending against the gale was lost, and that we must resign ourselves to go ashore; thus experiencing the fate which, on that fatal day, had befallen, under my eyes, twelve or fifteen other vessels, including the corvette *Pluto*, and a Turkish vessel carrying a rear-admiral’s flag, both of which, undoubtedly, lost all their cables.

“Knowing that the ship was no longer checked in her course, I hoisted the foretop-staysail in order to facilitate her careening on the starboard, and avoid the ships anchored near me; and having cleared these, I took in the mizzen, so that we might take the shore as near as possible to the town,

and be able to communicate with it through the tongue of sand which separates us from the Salt Lake, without annoyance from the Cossacks, who would not fail to come prowling around us.

"The night was very dark when we first touched the bottom. I desired to drive our bow ashore perpendicularly to the coast; but enormous breakers, catching the ship on the larboard quarter, swerved her gradually throughout the night, and even this morning, in a direction almost parallel to the shore, and the shifting sand filling in the furrow as fast as the keel ploughed it in its continuous movement, the result is, incredible as it may appear, that we are raised some sixteen feet at the fore and fourteen feet at the stern, and that our distance from the shore does not exceed seventy-five yards at most.

"The situation of the *Henri IV.*, at the present moment, may be thus described. Inclined a little to starboard, nearly parallel to the shore, with her head to the north-north-east; the sounding-line indicating about fourteen feet at the stern, and ten at the bow, sixteen feet on the larboard side, and thirteen on the starboard. She has made her bed, and no longer experiences the shocks which have shaken her from stem to stern for the last eighteen hours. She has sprung no serious leak, since the ordinary pumps suffice to keep down the water in the hold, and are not always at work.

"The helm is unshipped, and I think its iron-work broken; as also that of the stern-post.

"The ship has no other anchors than her kedges. Two of the ends of the chains remaining on board are embedded under the keel. The shallop is ashore, but, I suppose, can be repaired. The long-boat, the jolly-boat, and my galley are entirely unfit for service. Two of the small boats have been also driven ashore at Eupatoria, where they were employed,

on the morning of the 14th, in embarking cattle ; but they can and will be refitted. As for the barges, they are sunk, and probably in pieces. Our masts and yards are uninjured. I had had the sails taken in, and the yards and running rigging sent down. The topmasts were all struck at the earliest possible moment.

“By means of the gig I have established communication with the shore ; but the sea is still too high to attempt the disembarkation of the one hundred and ten invalids I have on board. I have contented myself with forwarding to the officer in command at Eupatoria a supply of ammunition for the mountain howitzers, to replace that which he consumed with so much effect, the day before yesterday, against the Russian cavalry.

“Our batteries remain loaded, and I have had occasion this morning to use our carronades in repressing a party of fifty Cossacks, who advanced at full gallop to capture the crew of my gig. It had got aground, and they were unable to launch it when needed.

“Such, admiral, is the present position of the *Henri IV.*, of the beautiful vessel of which I was so proud. It is very sad, and I cannot describe the grief I feel ; you will understand it, however, and sympathize with me.

“I hope that my health will keep up sufficiently to enable me to discharge to the last the duties I am bound to fulfil towards the state and towards my crew : as for my courage, *that* will not fail.

“I have not yet been able to communicate directly with the captain of the *Pluto*, which has run ashore opposite my own vessel, but he has informed me, through one of his sailors, that his ship having sprung a leak, and the sea broken in between decks, he abandoned her this morning, without losing a single man. M. Fisquet is at Eupatoria with all his crew, who

have succeeded in saving their effects. His report will acquaint you in detail with the circumstances of his misfortune, which does but add to mine.

“I have signalled to the *Lavoisier*, which has also broken one of her cables, and swings upon the other only through her engine, to make the best of her way to inform you of our unfortunate situation as soon as the state of the weather permits.

“I shall not forsake my ship as long as a plank remains to bear me, and to keep afloat the national colours. I wait for such assistance as you may be able to send, that I may save as much as possible of our provisions and war material. Being unable to disembark them in a hostile territory, I am in want of boats to receive them, and distribute them among the other vessels of the squadron.

“My crew, considerably weakened by the detachments which I have furnished, both for the siege of Sebastopol and the garrison of Eupatoria, is reduced to a small number of able-bodied seamen ; whence it results that the smallest operations are very difficult for us, and that those requiring strength are impossible. Otherwise, admiral, I am happy to say that my crew are admirable for zeal and discipline ; each man endeavours to redouble his energies, and flies at my slightest order. As for my officers, they second me in everything with that thorough intelligence, courage, and devotion of heart of which I have often informed you in other circumstances, and which have not failed me in these. You may rely upon it that everybody has done and will do his duty to the end with the most complete self-denial ; and if the navy loses one of its finest vessels, the loss is due only to the tempest which has proved too powerful for us, and has thrown us on the coast in spite of all the measures we adopted to resist it.

“In my last letter, a few days ago, I seemed to have fore-



WRECK OF THE "HENRI IV."

THEO. GALT

boded the misfortune which has overwhelmed me, when I wrote that 'I considered myself as good as lost in the road of Eupatoria, if a strong gale should blow up from the south-west.' My fears have been quickly realized."

This report concludes with special commendations of some of the officers, and is signed by the captain of the *Henri IV.*, M. Jehenne.

We may conclude our narrative with an interesting episode of this double shipwreck.

Under cover of the storm, a body of six thousand Russian horsemen made an attack on Eupatoria, but were repulsed by the able dispositions of the French commander, M. Osmont, to whom the defence of the place had been intrusted. The engagement was all the more creditable to the French because they were far inferior in numbers to the enemy.

M. Fisquet, captain of the *Pluto*, thus describes the assistance he was able to render the defending force, though his ship was in a position of much peril :—

"Half an hour after noon we had begun to feel the ground; soon afterwards our helm was unshipped. The convulsions of the vessel grew terrible. Each wave flung us either on the larboard or starboard side. I attempted to ease her careening on the larboard by poling with the yard of the main-topmast; but in the shifting sand it found no hold. At length the ship heeled over on the seaward-side, and did not right herself again.

"At this moment we heard a vigorous cannonade. The town was attacked by six thousand Russians, with sixteen guns. Squadrons of Cossacks advanced from the east in the direction commanded by our artillery. The *Pluto* was thus

able to render another and a last service to her country. We cleared the deck for fighting, loaded the small arms, and brought a couple of guns to bear upon the enemy. We were ready to fire as soon as the Cossacks got within range. They found the defences of the town in too good order, and beat a quick retreat."

In the terrible storm described above eleven British transport-ships were wrecked, and six disabled. The steamship *Prince* was lost, with all her crew and passengers, 144 in number, and a most important cargo, valued at £500,000, intended for the supply of the British army before Sebastopol. The total loss of life in this memorable tempest has been estimated at 340.

XXXIX.

WRECK OF THE "DUROC."

August 13, 1856.



THE *Duroc* steam-packet, commanded by Lieutenant de la Vaissière, was wrecked, in the night of the 12th to 13th of August 1856, on the Mellish reef, which lies about one hundred and sixty leagues to the north-west of New Caledonia. The *Duroc* had sailed from this remote French colony on the 7th of August, bound for France.

The Mellish reef lies level with the water; and its actual position, after the shipwreck, was found to differ considerably from that laid down in the charts. It is situated in latitude $17^{\circ} 23' S.$, and longitude $153^{\circ} 35' E.$

After the ship had struck, and when daylight rose upon the waters, an islet of sand, about seven hundred feet wide, was discovered; and there, when all hope of saving the vessel had to be abandoned, her captain transported the sick, the supplies of food and water, the distilling apparatus, the oven, the forge, and, in fact, everything which could be removed in his small boats, or on hastily-constructed rafts.

During this operation, the captain also set some of his men to work on the construction of a pinnace measuring fifty feet in the keel, employing the lower masts and bowsprit. Tents

were run up with sails for the shelter of the crew and the protection of the provisions. The distilling apparatus yielded an abundant supply of water, and on the 25th of August it was found that the stores would ration one-and-thirty persons for four months. The captain, therefore, resolved to despatch at once the remainder of his crew in the boats ; and, on the 25th, they set out, under the command of Midshipman Magdelaine—namely, in the long-boat, M. Magdelaine and fifteen men ; in the jolly-boat, M. Augey-Dufresse and nine men ; and in the gig, nine men and the mate.

M. Magdelaine was ordered to proceed to the coast of Australia, and to ascend it as far as Torres Strait, where the captain thought he would fall in with some ship which would carry him and his companions to a convenient port. Unfortunately the boats were very small ; and though they had on board so few men, with only two changes of clothing for each, and reduced rations for twenty-five days, they were much too heavily laden to encounter a heavy sea.

It was in the afternoon of the 25th that the little flotilla started, and even then the sea was much disturbed by the effects of a succession of violent winds. It was found that the boats immediately shipped water at each swell of the billows, and there were but two or three men who could be trusted at the tiller.

M. Magdelaine steered his course for Cape Tribulation, which had the advantage of being at once the nearest point of land, and, at the same time, the most remarkable through the distance from which it is ordinarily visible at sea. His charge was by no means a light one ; for he was compelled to keep a constant watch on all three boats, especially during the night, to prevent a separation, which would probably have been fatal to the crazy boat commanded by the mate.

On the 27th the sea suddenly rose in a very alarming manner.



BUILDING THE PINNACE.

Each boat could think only of its own safety, and was forced to throw overboard everything not of absolute necessity.

Here we may take up the narrative of M. Magdelaine :—

“Towards noon, while I was taking the meridian, I felt myself suddenly swept away by an enormous wave, and when I reappeared on the surface, I found myself fully twenty-five fathoms distant from my boat, with my quadrant still in my hand ; barrels and chests containing provisions were floating all around me. I thought all hope of rescue over, when I caught sight of the gig, which had kept in the rear, and, guided by signs made from the long-boat, was searching for me. I recovered strength enough to swim towards it, and was picked up just as, my energies giving way, I was about to disappear.

“If I dwell upon this purely personal incident, it is because it was attended with consequences so fatal to the rest of our voyage, that I feel it necessary to furnish the details.

“The first unfortunate result was the loss of my instruments, of nearly all the provisions on board the long-boat, of the men’s clothes, and the bag containing my uniform, my papers, and the correspondence of the captain of the *Duroc*, such as his report of the shipwreck, and official letters to the consuls and authorities of the countries I might touch at, and, finally, the pass-books of the men in the long-boat.

“While the gig rescued me in a manner so unexpected, the coxswain of the long-boat, Quartermaster Laury, assisted by a sailor named Burel, both of whom retained their presence of mind, sprang, one to the tiller, and the other to the sail, which they quickly lowered, put out an oar, and succeeded in bringing the boat before the sea.

“The other men then recovered their courage. Everything was thrown overboard, while with shoes and buckets they set to work to bail out the water, which filled the boat

to the very gunwale. The boat and her crew were at length made safe, and soon she rejoined the other boats, picking up on the way a cask of water and about forty-five pounds of biscuit.

“It was not until evening that the state of the sea enabled me to resume the command of my own boat; but, deprived of provisions, and of nearly everything necessary for steering our course, I trusted thenceforward to the observations taken by M. Dufresse.

“At evening, on the 30th, the fifth day of our voyage, we made Cape Tribulation, and I passed the night moored inside a reef. I then thought that I had discharged the most difficult part of my mission, little expecting the bitter trials that were yet to impose upon us the hardest sacrifices, and to demand the most absolute devotion.

“On my route I had fallen in with, in succession, an island and a reef not laid down upon the charts. I had feared at first we should be carried out of our course by the currents; but the exactness with which I made the land proved the accuracy of the latitude I had determined for these two points.

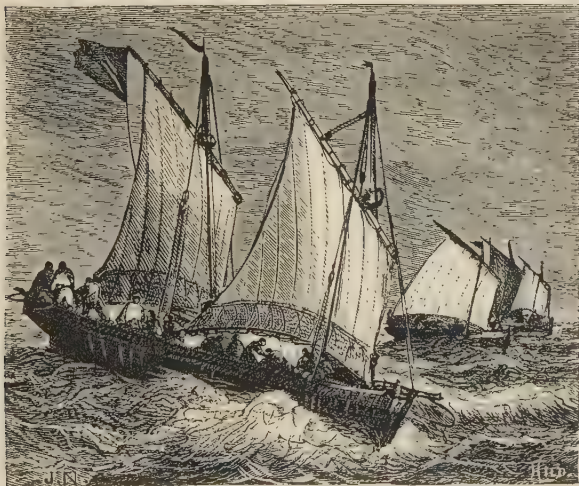
“At nine o'clock, on the evening of the 28th, I doubled an island of red sand, without any fringing reef, in latitude $16^{\circ} 24' S.$, and longitude $147^{\circ} 54' E.$

“The next day, the 29th, the jolly-boat, which was ahead, signalled to me that a reef, level with the water, was in sight, —the crests of its coral rocks rising above the surface, and covering an area of several miles, with an azure lagoon in the centre. Latitude $16^{\circ} 36' S.$, longitude $145^{\circ} 40' E.$

“On the 31st, before beginning to ascend the Australian coast, I made an inspection of the provisions remaining in the three boats. We still possessed about one hundred and sixty pounds of biscuit, thirty-five pints of brandy, and nearly

fourteen gallons of wine. I took in a full supply of fresh water here, in spite of the presence of some natives, and the difficulties of disembarkation.

“On the 9th of September I arrived at Port Albany, spending each night in the shelter of an islet or point of land, unable to obtain water except by opening a communication with the natives, living upon fish, roots, shell-fish,—in a



THE BOATS OF THE “DUROC.”

word, on all the resources to be obtained at the places where we passed the night. I expended our biscuits only when these resources failed.

“I had counted on finding at Port Albany a convenient watering-place, and, perhaps, an English settlement. But I could not discover a single trace of ships. The springs were dried up; and after a morning spent in fruitless search, I decided, notwithstanding our enfeebled condition, on making

for Coupang, in the island of Timor, as soon as I had succeeded in renewing our supply of fresh water. I did not disguise from myself the risk I incurred of a failure of provisions; and, for a moment, I was on the point of starting for the coast of New Guinea, to lay in a cargo of cocoa-nuts, but the want of charts led me to renounce this project.

“On the 20th of September, having filled our water-casks at Possession Island, through the agency of the natives, who appeared to hold communication with English ships, and had picked up a few words of English, I divided between the boats the remainder of our biscuit—ninety pounds—which allowed a daily ration for each man of about three ounces and a half, reckoning upon a voyage of ten to twelve days.

“I attempted to raise the moral condition, now somewhat lowered, of men fatigued by fifteen days of privations of every kind, and taking once more to the open sea, confided myself to the care of Providence, who had already guided us so happily, and had saved us, in the midst of difficulties, from the additional misfortune of sickness or disease. We continued our course without accident up to the 17th of September. My men, notwithstanding their scanty food, preserved their health, when, in a manner as unexpected as it was terrible, a dead calm overtook us.

“On the 18th I attempted to make the men row; but the heat and want of water prevented them from continuing the exercise.

“On the 19th the minds of some among us were seized with terror, and I resolved to profit by it to make a last effort, rowing straight for the middle of the island of Timor, which I estimated to lie about thirty leagues off.

“I wished to set the example in my own person, and taking advantage of the coolness of the night, we did not quit our oars from five in the evening until daybreak, though we

had but a pint of water to quench our thirst throughout our arduous and prolonged toil.

“At sunrise land rose before us, in a line of upwards of twenty leagues in length. The sight reanimated the courage of every individual, and seemed to inspire him with new strength. Assisted by a slight breeze, I succeeded, before night, in entering an opening which I took to be the mouth of a river, and from which arose an immense cloud of smoke.

“On the morning of the 21st I was obliged to quit this point, being unable to obtain either provisions or water ; and I procured the latter only by keeping along the coast until I came to an inhabited district. On the 22nd, at nightfall, having had no food since the morning, we reached the port of Coupang.

“I went immediately to wait upon the resident, M. Frœnkell, who hastened to place at our disposal every resource which the colony presented. For three days our men rested, refreshed themselves with abundant nourishment, and recovered their strength so as to undertake a new voyage.

By the advice of the resident, I resolved to embark, on the 25th, in the packet going to Batavia, which every month calls in at Coupang. Before sailing, I caused the three boats and their appendages to be sold at public auction in the name of the French Government.

“During the three days I spent at Coupang, M. Frœnkell did not cease to bestow upon us the most assiduous and generous attentions. Before setting out, I addressed to him, on behalf of myself and crew, a letter of acknowledgment. In a succinct report I supplied him with all the information necessary for ships bound from Coupang to Sydney to ascertain, *en route*, the fate of our companions.

“M. Frœnkell provided me with letters to the resident of Surabaya, where the packet would remain for some days,

and the resident of Batavia, who would furnish me with the means of returning to France.

"On the 25th of September I left Coupang on board the steamer *Padang*. Nearly all my men were in good health."

The remainder of M. Magdelaine's report is of no interest to the general reader ; but the narrative is taken up and concluded in a letter by M. de Lavergne, published in the French official journal. It is dated "Batavia, February 7, 1857," and runs as follows :—

"The *Duroc*, after having escaped so many trials, has perished by shipwreck ; and it is by a providential chance that I am able to inform you of its fate. Fifty days spent on a sand-bank ; a boat constructed* under a burning sky with the ship's masts sawn into planks ; a voyage of eight hundred leagues undertaken by one-and-thirty persons in this frail skiff, accompanied by hunger, thirst, and disease ; some of our men palsy-stricken, some of them apparently on the point of death ;—such are the incidents which have cast a gloom over my life. Undoubtedly they would have exhausted my health and energy, if my wife and little girl, unfortunately associated with me in these misfortunes, had not supported them—one with the calm and courage that often result from danger, the other with the simple resignation of infancy ; if, in these painful circumstances, an exact discipline, a prompt obedience, an intelligent and well-sustained industry, had not consecrated the three years and a half of care bestowed on the instruction of my people.

"Having reached Coupang, in the island of Timor, on the 30th of October, we set out again on the 13th of November,

* This boat, named the *Deliverance*, was launched on the 29th of September ; and on the 2nd of October M. de la Vaissière and the thirty persons who had remained with him since the shipwreck quitted the islet to undertake their perilous expedition.

and were able to reach, in the steam-packet of the Moluccas, the island of Java, early in December. We visited successively Banda, Amboyna, Ternate, and Menada, in the island of Celebes,—overwhelmed in all the Dutch establishments by the most touching attentions, welcomed with the most generous hospitality.

“Hitherto all had gone well. The south-west monsoon, which, before we reached Timor, had endangered our boat, the *Deliverance*, and nearly capsized it, awakened at intervals the voices of its terrible storms; but the steamer made steady progress. So we reached Macassar. But then, for six weeks, raged one continual tempest. After four fruitless attempts to cross the Java Sea, the steamer *Amboyna* returned disabled into the roadstead; and it seemed for a moment as if we had crossed Torres Strait only to seek a burial-place in another ocean.

“Removing, after a month’s waiting, to the *Padang* steamer, we made another effort, and were again driven back, after being six days at sea. At length, however, on the 26th of January, we cast anchor at Surabaya, in the island of Java. I touched at Samarang on the 4th of February in a Bordeaux vessel, which has just brought me to Batavia; and on the 12th I hope to pass through the Strait of Sunda on my homeward voyage.”

XL.

LOSS OF THE "ROYAL CHARTER."

October 1859.



THE *Royal Charter* was a splendid screw-steamer engaged in the Australian trade. She was built in 1855, splendidly equipped, cased in iron, and not unjustly regarded as a fine specimen of modern naval architecture.

On the 26th of August 1859 she sailed from Melbourne, "homeward-bound," with 338 passengers on board, besides a crew of 112 officers, sailors, and engineers. Her voyage from Melbourne to the Irish coast was swift and propitious. At Queenstown, the port of Cork, she landed thirteen passengers in a shore-boat; these passengers little knowing how sad a fate they had escaped by quitting the goodly vessel. Next day a steam-tug put on board eleven riggers, who had been assisting to work a ship to Cardiff, so that the maximum was raised to 448 souls. The cargo was small and light, though valuable, being chiefly composed of gold and specie, worth, at the lowest computation, not less than £500,000.

A violent gale from the east-north-east broke out on the 25th of October, and acted with great force on the *Royal Charter*. At about eight o'clock in the evening she made Point Lynas. The Welsh coast in this quarter is very

dangerous, and Captain Taylor, the commander of the *Royal Charter*, threw up a succession of signal rockets, to attract a pilot from the shore. None, however, appeared; and the gale increasing every moment in violence, the ship was making leeway, and drifting rapidly towards the beach. The night was one of intense darkness; and though both anchors were let go, the gale blew with a violence so supreme that the chains parted, and, though the reversed engines were worked at their full power, the *Royal Charter* drifted hopelessly towards the shore, and at last, after a painful interval of suspense, struck upon the rocks near Moelfra, in four fathoms depth of water.

Notwithstanding the suddenness and terribleness of the disaster, both passengers and crew preserved their presence of mind, and maintained the most complete discipline. The masts and rigging were cut and thrown overboard, but without in any way relieving the ship, which continuously ground and battered against the jagged, sharp-pointed rocks. The drift-spars and rigging got entangled in the screw, and arrested its movements, so that the vessel beat broadside forwards against the iron-bound coast. The officers, though convinced that all hope of safety was gone, did their duty with manly fortitude, and the crew seconded them with all the steady unpretending heroism of English mariners. One of the common sailors, by name Joseph Rogers, volunteered to carry a rope on shore through all the seething and foamy surf. In his perilous enterprise he succeeded, and had the ship kept afloat, all, or nearly all of those on board would probably have reached the land. But it was not to be. Billow after billow lifted the great ship like a toy, and hurled her nearer and yet nearer to the shore. The scene in the saloon, below deck, was very touching. Undaunted by the roar of wind and wave, and the clash of the vessel upon the rocks, a clergy-

man on board—the Rev. Mr. Hodge—began to read a portion of the Common Prayer-Book suitable to the circumstances of himself and his companions; but a succession of tremendous seas striking the vessel, she parted amidships. The foremost portion was almost immediately afterwards again divided. Nearly all on board were washed away, and many who escaped drowning were crushed by the breaking up of the ship. In the course of a few moments four hundred and fifty-nine persons “passed away!” Captain Taylor was the last man seen on board alive. He lashed his body to a spar before trusting himself to the remorseless waters. Alas, they had no pity upon him, and, in common with all his officers, he perished!

Let us glance for a moment at the spectacle which this appalling wreck presented from the shore.

A man, says Charles Dickens, living on the nearest hill-top overlooking the sea, being blown out of bed at about day-break by the wind that had begun to strip his roof off, and getting upon a ladder with his nearest neighbour, to construct some temporary device for keeping his house over his head, saw from the ladder's elevation, as he looked down by chance towards the shore, some dark troubled object close in with the land. And he and the other, descending to the beach, and finding the sea mercilessly beating over a great broken ship, clambered up the stony ways, like staircases without stairs, on which the wild village of Llanalgo hangs, in little clusters, as fruit hangs on boughs, and gave the alarm. And so, over the hill-slopes, and past the waterfall, and down the gullies where the land drains off into the ocean, the scattered quarrymen and fishermen inhabiting that part of Wales came running to the dismal sight—their clergyman among them. And as they stood in the leaden morning, stricken with pity, leaning hard

against the wind, their breath and vision often failing as the sleet and spray rushed at them from the ever forming and dissolving mountains of sea, and as the wool which was a part of the vessel's cargo blew in with the salt foam and remained upon the land when the foam melted, they saw the ship's life-boat put off from one of the heaps of wreck. And first there were three men in her; and in a moment she cap-sized, and there were but two; and again she was struck by a vast mass of water, and there was but one; and again she was thrown bottom upward, and that one, with his arm stuck through the broken planks, and waving as if for the help that could never reach him, went down into the deep.*

From the lips of some of the survivors fuller particulars of the last hours of the ill-fated vessel are here put together:—

When the main-mast was about to be cut away, the passengers nearest to the entrance-doors attempted to throw them open, and finding some difficulty, immediately smashed them to atoms. There was, however, no hurry, no confusion, no selfish violence; every man silently took his seat. On deck, officers and sailors, naked to the waist, laboured to cut away the main-mast; but the ship so rolled and thumped that, in delivering their blows, the men were frequently flung upon the deck. To some extent, nevertheless, the ship's motion assisted their work; the waves, too, lent their aid; and before long the mast tottered, reeled, and then, with a loud crash, fell overboard. Immediately afterwards the furious sea threw the vessel still higher up the rocks.

The fore-mast was then cut away, and almost at the same time the mizzen-mast broke off at the mast-head. The boats were lowered; but no sooner did they touch the waves than they were carried with resistless force against the rocks, and

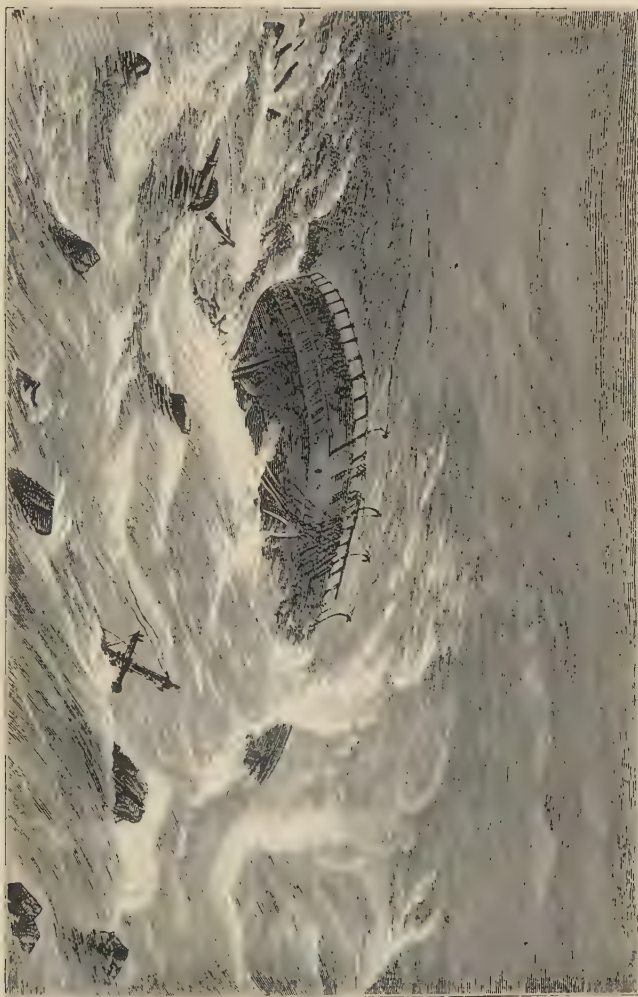
* Charles Dickens, "The Uncommercial Traveller."

their inmates were either crushed or drowned in the sea. To the ordinary observer, however, there seemed no need of boats, the vessel was so close upon the shore.

The passengers, meanwhile, had remained in the cabin, preserving their composure as best they could. Mr. Cowie, the second mate, accompanied by the purser and a couple of seamen, came down. They were stripped, having on only their shirts and trousers. They passed through the saloon to the powder-magazine, and as they went they encouraged the passengers by cheerful words, assuring them they were not far from the shore. At the same time the water forced its way into the saloon, and the waves striking with increased force, the vessel thumped much harder. Those in the lower saloon then removed into the upper, where some of the first and third class passengers had assembled. Not a word was spoken; hope and fear alternately threw lights and shadows over every countenance, and it was this involuntary display of emotion that alone revealed how each heart was throbbing with anxiety and dread. Only once was the dreadful stillness of that assembly broken. A young lady, about twenty—Miss Murray—who was on board with her father, mother, and brother, fainted, and was immediately carried to her cabin, from which she came forth no more.

According to another narrator, the scene on deck must have greatly contrasted with that in the cabin; for there, he says, all was confusion: fore and aft, saloon, cabin, and steerage passengers mixed; fathers and mothers clasping their children in their arms; wives clinging to their husbands, and shrieking, "Save me! save me!" The captain sent word to the ladies to come forward, and they should be sent ashore on the hawser; but the moment they appeared on deck they were washed overboard.

WRECK OF THE "ROYAL CHARTER"



In comparing these two accounts, it is to be remembered that those on deck would see all the reality of the danger—how imminent it was, and how little chance there was of escaping from it. They would see the boiling waves, and the rugged rocks, and the helplessness of the dismantled ship; while much of this great horror would necessarily be unknown to the passengers seated in the cabin.

We turn from these pathetic particulars of the wrecked vessel and her doomed lives to the scene which the shore presented when visited by Charles Dickens.

The divers were busy at their work. They were bringing up from the bottom of the sea the gold they had found on the preceding day—some five-and-twenty thousand pounds. Of three hundred and fifty thousand pounds worth of gold, three hundred thousand pounds worth, in round numbers, was at that time recovered. The great bulk of the remainder was surely and steadily coming up. Some loss of sovereigns necessarily took place; indeed, at first sovereigns had drifted in with the sand, and been scattered far and wide over the beach like sea-shells. So tremendous was the force of the sea, that it beat one great ingot of gold deep into a strong and heavy piece of the ship's solid iron-work, in which, also, several loose sovereigns that the ingot had swept in before it had been found, as firmly embedded as though the iron had been liquid when they were forced into it. It was remarked of the bodies that came ashore, too, that they had been stunned to death, and not suffocated. Observation, both of the internal change that had been wrought in them, and of the expression of the countenance, showed that death had come to them in a merciful and easy form.

Mr. Dickens afterwards visited the little church, in whose graveyard the bodies brought ashore were solemnly interred.

"It is a little church of great antiquity: there is reason to believe that some church has occupied the spot a thousand years or more. The pulpit was gone, and other things usually belonging to the church were gone, owing to its living congregation having deserted it for the neighbouring schoolroom, and yielded it up to the dead. The very Commandments had been shouldered out of their places in the bringing in of the dead; the black wooden tables on which they were painted were askew, and on the stone pavement below them, and on the stone pavement all over the church, were the marks and stains where the drowned had been cast down. The eye, with little or no aid from the imagination, could yet see how the bodies had been turned, and where the head had been, and where the feet. Some faded traces of the wreck of the Australian ship may be discernible on the stone pavement of this little church hundreds of years hence, when the digging for gold in Australia shall have long and long ceased out of the land."

Here, at one time, lay forty-four shipwrecked men and women, waiting for conveyance to their last resting-places. Here, with the weeping and wailing of the relatives of the dead in every room of his house, Mr. Hughes, the excellent clergyman of Llanalgo, worked alone for hours, solemnly surrounded by eyes that could not see him, and by lips that could not speak to him; patiently examining the tattered clothing, cutting off buttons, locks of hair, marks from linen—anything that might lead to subsequent identification; studying faces, looking for a scar, a bent finger, a crooked toe; comparing letters sent to him with the ruin about him. "My dearest brother had bright gray eyes and a pleasant smile," one sister wrote. Alas, the eyes had lost their brightness, and no smile flickered about the pale cold lips!

In that lonely place it was not easy to obtain even such common commodities in towns as ordinary disinfectants.

Pitch, as the readiest thing at hand, had been burned in the church, and the frying-pan in which it had bubbled over a brazier of coals was still there with its ashes. Hard by the communion-table were some boots that had been taken off the drowned, and preserved: a gold-digger's boot, cut down the leg for its easier removal; a man's trodden-down ankle-boot, with a buff cloth top; and others, soaked and sandy, weedy and salt.

"From the church," says Dickens, "Mr. Hughes and I passed out into the churchyard. Here there lay, at that time, one hundred and forty-five bodies that had come ashore from the wreck. He had buried them, when not identified, in graves containing four each. He had numbered each body in a register describing it, and had placed a corresponding number on each coffin, and over each grave. Identified bodies he had buried singly, in private graves, in another part of the churchyard. Several bodies had been exhumed from the graves of four, as relatives had come from a distance and seen his register; and, when recognized, these had been reburied in private graves, so that the mourners might erect separate headstones over the remains. In all such cases he had performed the funeral service a second time, and the ladies of his house had attended. There had been no offence in the poor ashes when they were brought again to the light of day: the beneficent earth had already absorbed it. The drowned were buried in their clothes. To supply the great, sudden demand for coffins, he had got all the neighbouring people handy at tools to work the livelong day, and Sunday likewise. The coffins were neatly formed. I had seen two, waiting for occupants, under the lee of the ruined walls of a stone hut on the beach, within call of the tent where the Christmas feast was held. Similarly, one of the graves for four was lying open and ready here in the churchyard. So much of the scanty

space was already devoted to the wrecked people, that the villagers had begun to express uneasy doubts whether they themselves could lie in their own ground, with their forefathers and descendants, by-and-by. The churchyard being but a step from the clergyman's dwelling-house, we crossed to the latter. The white surplice was hanging up near the door, ready to be put on at any time for a funeral service."

There were many sadly interesting memorials of the terrible catastrophe in the good clergyman's house. These we have no space to enumerate, with but one exception. A sailor cast up by the sea bore about him, printed on a perforated lace card, the following singular (but unavailing) charm :—

A BLESSING.

"May the blessing of God await thee! May the sun of glory shine around thy bed; and may the gates of plenty, honour, and happiness be ever open to thee! May no sorrow distress thy days, may no grief disturb thy nights; may the pillow of peace kiss thy cheek, and the pleasures of imagination attend thy dreams. And when length of years makes thee tired of earthly joys, and the curtain of death gently closes around thy last sleep of human existence, may the angel of God attend thy bed, and take care that the expiring lamp of life shall not receive one rude blast to hasten on its extinction!"

Alas! the lamp of life was hurriedly extinguished, yet was not the prayer wholly unfulfilled; for there can be no doubt that around his last sleep the curtain of death had fallen very gently.

XLI.

LOSS OF THE "BOMBAY."

December 1864.



HE *Bombay* was a screw line-of-battle ship, commanded by Captain A. Colin Campbell; and her destruction by fire created a great sensation in the public mind, the more especially that it was accompanied by a very serious loss of life.

The following account of its loss is given by the commander-in-chief on the South American station, to which the *Bombay* was attached, in a letter addressed to the Secretary of the Admiralty, and dated December 15, 1864:—

"H.M.S. 'STROMBOLI,' MONTE VIDEO.

"SIR,—I much regret that I have to report the total loss by fire of Her Majesty's ship *Bombay*.

"She left this anchorage under sail at 7 A.M. yesterday, when I transferred my flag to the *Triton*. About 5 P.M. of the same day, I received intelligence that the *Bombay* was on fire near the English Bank, or Flores Island, about thirteen miles from this place. I immediately despatched the *Stromboli* to her assistance, and proceeded myself in the *Triton*; but so rapidly had the fire extended, that the ship had been deserted long before assistance could reach her.

"The ship's company had been at general quarters in the afternoon till a little after 3 P.M.; the foremost lower-deck guns were then told off for divisional exercise, but firing had not commenced from them, when, about ten minutes after the retreat had been beat, fire was reported to have broken out in the after part of the ship about the after-hold. The fire-bell was immediately rung, and with the greatest order and promptness an

abundant supply of water was obtained. But the fire appears at once to have spread with uncontrollable rapidity ; which gives me the impression that it originated very close to the spirit-room, and that the spirit-casks must almost immediately have burst and ignited.

"At 3.35 P.M. the fire was reported. At 3.52, finding the fire was quickly gaining, the boats were hoisted out. At 4 P.M. the boats were out, with the exception of the second launch, when the flames, coming up the hatchways—the awnings and sails having been burned—rendered it impossible for men to work. The sick had already been passed into the boats, and the rest of the ship's company now followed. At a quarter past four the main-mast went over the side—the boats then being scarcely clear of the ship—and many officers and men were still holding on to ropes alongside and to the fore part of the ship, and others floating on the spars, &c. Soon after the main-mast fell, the stoppers of the anchors being burned through, the anchors fell, and it seems many men who were upon or near them must have lost their lives.

"The ship was under sail, hove to, when the fire occurred, steam not having been up.

"At 8.25 the after-magazine blew up, and the ship sank in about eight fathoms.

"Among the officers, Mr. John K. Smallhorn, assistant-surgeon, is the only one missing, and who was drowned alongside.

"The French mail-packet being at this moment on the point of departure, I am not able to give a more detailed report ; but I am endeavouring to ascertain the number and names of men missing, which, I am sorry to say, amounts to about ninety-three.* But the boats having been picked up by vessels proceeding to different places, we cannot as yet get a correct return.—I have the honour to be, &c.,

"CHAS. A. J. B. ELLIOT,

"Rear-Admiral and Commander-in-Chief."

A court-martial for the trial of Captain Campbell was held at Portsmouth as soon as possible after his return to England, and the evidence then given supplies us with some additional details.

From Captain Campbell's "plain unvarnished tale," it would seem that, as soon as the alarm of fire was given, he attempted to go below, but could not get beyond the cockpit ladder, being driven back by the smoke. The flames were then just appearing at the after-hatchway. The large bilge-pumps, being only fitted to work on the lower deck, were not employed,

* The correct number was afterwards ascertained to be eighty-nine.

but the other pumps were immediately set in motion. Various tanks and sea-cocks were also turned on, and a vast flood of water poured into the hold.

After the fire, says Captain Campbell, I examined some of the magazine men, and appointed a committee of officers to trace out the cause of the fire, if possible. One man—the lamp-trimmer—could not be discovered. During the day the lamps were kept in the passage, between the cabins and the ship's starboard side. They were trimmed in the bread-room or after-cockpit. All the magazine lamps burned candles. I think the ship's steward was the last man that saw the missing lamp-trimmer. At quarters he was stationed below to trim lights. The hatchways at quarters, not in use, were covered with tarpaulins, which were kept triced up in readiness over them. The after-hold hatchway on the orlop-deck, where the spirits are hoisted up, was also open.

The spirits, it appears, were always measured off on the main-deck in the presence of an officer; but Captain Campbell could not speak from personal experience how the spirits were measured off on the day of the fire.

On that day the crew were half an hour later to dinner.

With regard to measuring off the spirits on board the *Bombay*, it was done every other day; the next day's rum being poured into a beaker, which was then sent into the spirit-room.

When the ship was on fire, the men sprang into the boats over the sides, from the chains and the quarters, as they could best manage. The stay-tackles gave way as the last boat was being hoisted out, having suffered from the flames, which were then rolling up all the hatchways and out of all the ports. Even the rigging and sails were on fire, and on the port-side the smoke and flames coiled away to leeward in immense volumes.

The boats, as they were hoisted out, were taken in charge by the officers properly belonging to them. The jolly-boat, manned by volunteers, was despatched to the burning ship to rescue the men still clinging to her ropes and spars. When Captain Campbell himself was picked up out of the water by the gig, he made it his first object to redistribute the crews of the boats, that they might not under or over load, and that as many lives as possible might be saved. In his evidence he bestowed a special eulogium on the gallantry displayed by Mr. Mandeville and his crew in the jolly-boat. They rowed round and round the burning wreck, though the task was a dangerous one, as burning spars were continually falling, molten lead pouring from her sides; and there was the terrible risk that at any moment the magazine might explode.

Mr. Watts, the master, and Lieutenant Carr, were picked up by the launch; Lieutenants Fullerton and Buchanan, by the pinnace. The former also rescued the first lieutenant, Mr. Kelly, but not until he was in a very exhausted condition. He was almost the last on board.

In continuing his evidence, Captain Campbell said :—

“Almost immediately over the fore-handing-room of the after-magazine in the screw-alley, tanks of tallow, paint, and spare gear were stowed. No steam had been got up on the day of the fire, the fires in the stoke-hole not having been lighted. When the fire broke out, two pumps in the engine-room were worked by hand. On board the *Bombay* there was a regular fire-brigade.....The starboard, or steam-launch, was the first boat hoisted out from the ship: she was capable of accommodating about two hundred men. The water was at this time smooth, but afterwards there was a nasty chop of a sea. Had there been as heavy a sea when the fire first broke out as there was in about two hours afterwards, the loss of life would have been seriously greater. When the boat

with the volunteer crew visited the ship for the last time, she carried off with her the last man then left alive."

We may next quote Lieutenant Stirling's evidence :—

He said that shell was being passed up for practice when the crew were at general quarters. About twenty men formed the fire-brigade on board the *Bombay*, under the charge of the mate of the orlop-deck. There was also a party of eight or ten men under the chief engineer, whose duty it was to work the pumps. He was on the fore part of the lower-deck at quarters when he heard the fire-bell ring,—the most terrible of sounds, perhaps, on board ship,—and giving up his immediate duty to Lieutenant Carr, he hurried to his fire-station on the upper deck. Smoke was then coming up the ventilators on the poop and quarter-deck, and the hatchways, which were immediately covered. The hammocks were passed out of the nettings, opened, dipped overboard, and then piled upon the fire, with the view of stifling it. Water was also drawn from alongside and poured on the deck, to keep the hammocks and blankets as wet as possible. But the smoke came up in clouds of increasing density. Preparations were then made for hoisting out the boats, while the pumps were still kept vigorously going.

Lieutenant Stirling next describes the series of mishaps that befell the boats. The second launch caught fire. In attempting to lower the dingey, the halliards were either burnt or carried away, and the boat was stove. An attempt to get out the upper boat proved unsuccessful. As the nettings were now in flames on both sides of the ship as far forward as the fore-rigging, and as the devouring fire had also seized on the fore-sail and fore-topsail, everything that could be laid hold of and would float was thrown overboard, and the men followed, clinging to plank and spar until rescued by the boats which had been successfully launched. With the help

of a rope fastened to the bowsprit-shroud, Lieutenant Stirling trusted himself to the mercy of the waves. Soon afterwards the main-mast fell on the starboard side, followed by the mizzen-mast; and then the port sheet-anchor fell, knocking the lower boom away, which had afforded support to a good number of men. Two or three minutes more, and the other anchors gave way, each of them proving fatal in its fall to several seamen. The lead melting from the gammoning of the bowsprit by the intense heat compelled many who were clinging to spars in the water under the vessel's bows to loosen their grasp, and the greedy waves sucked them in. As for Lieutenant Stirling himself, he was picked up by the jolly-boat just as his strength was exhausted, and for half an hour he remained insensible.

In reply to other questions put by various members of the court-martial, the lieutenant said that the ship's fore-sail was not set, but the fire ran up the rigging directly the flames reached the upper deck. The launch, he said, was the last boat to leave the ship when the main-mast fell; all the other boats at that time being nearly half a mile distant. The jolly-boat, however, had made three trips to the burning wreck, and rescued all she could. "I feel satisfied," added the lieutenant, "that everything was done by those in the boats to save the lives of their comrades in the ship and the water. I noticed the launch and pinnace particularly; and these were so crowded as to be quite unmanageable. It was necessary to keep them bow-on to the sea to prevent them from swamping."

The general result of the inquiry went to show that the fire broke out in the immediate vicinity of the magazine, though its cause could not be ascertained. It spread with a rapidity which defied every effort made to check it, and scarcely

allowed time for hoisting out the boats. The captain was honourably acquitted by his judges, for no blame could fairly attach to him, or, indeed, to any under his command. The fate of the *Bombay* was another illustration of the awfully destructive nature of a fire at sea.

XLII.

WRECK OF THE "BORYSTHENES."

December 15, 1865.



THE year 1866 opened with a series of violent gales, such as had not been experienced for years in the European waters. On the northern and western shores of France their consequences were specially disastrous. The number of shipwrecks rose to the alarming total of ninety-two, that of the victims to thirty-one, though it is to be feared that these figures do not represent the whole truth, the sea having cast ashore numerous derelicts and a vast quantity of spars and timbers.

This dreary picture, however, is relieved by some happy escapes. At Havre, the *Caldera*, a superb vessel of seven hundred and fifty tons, was extricated, safe and sound, with all her crew and passengers, from the critical situation in which the tempest had placed her. The life-boat of the Boulogne Humane Society saved, in the course of a single week, the crews of a lugger belonging to Nantes, a fishing-boat of Etaples, and an English brig, all three of which were driven ashore within fourteen hundred yards of the mouth of the harbour. At Dieppe five men owed their lives to the devotedness of a young man watching on the pier. Not far from Ouessant, the crew of a Norwegian bark, the *Deodata*, after having

remained for eight-and-forty hours on the isle of Bannec, where they nearly perished of hunger, were rescued by the fishermen of Conquet.

On our own coasts, which a French writer graphically describes as “a perfect swarm of shipping” (*véritable fourmilière de navires*), the disasters were even more terrible than on the shores of France; and the columns of our daily papers were crowded with sad details. The number of ships lost was variously estimated at from three to four hundred. In the road between Torbay and Brixham Harbour alone forty ships went ashore during the night of the 10th to the 11th of January. Others sank out at sea, and were never more heard of; among them a French three-master, the *Occidental*, with a crew of fourteen men, bound from Havre to Martinique. It was in this terrible storm that the *London* went down, with its two hundred and fifty victims, under circumstances which we shall describe in our next chapter.

A few weeks before, on the 15th of December, the coast of Algeria was the scene of a scarcely less tragical event. In a stormy, boisterous night, the steam-packet *Borysthenes*, having touched on a reef near Oran, sank at the stern, and seventy persons lost their lives. For two days one hundred and eighty seamen and passengers clung to those portions of the ship which remained above the waves, or huddled together, without resources, on the barren rock. One of the survivors of the catastrophe has described its details very vividly in the following narrative:—

“The captain assured us that between ten and eleven at night we should arrive at Oran. Great was our joy, for truly to see nothing but sky and sea for two long days is very dispiriting; and, besides, the perpetual motion of the ship fatigues and depresses you; you sigh for land.

"At dinner we were all very lively. At eight o'clock we filled and locked our carpet-bags, that we might be ready to disembark the sooner. At half-past nine we were still on the poop, conversing. Suddenly, the sea grew heavy and rolled violently. I went to lie down, but the rolling of the vessel preventing me from closing my eyes, I complained of it to my neighbour; he did not reply, for he was sleeping soundly.

"I dozed at last until about eleven o'clock, when I heard a voice shout, 'Stop! We are on it! Back the engines! Quick!' Then the hoarse sound of the screw ceased; the ship seemed immovable; men ran to and fro upon deck. 'Come, come,' I cried to my neighbour, 'we are there; we are going into harbour; they are at work above.' As I said these words, seized with a sudden presentiment, I sprang from my hammock to go upon deck. At that moment a terrible crash was heard, accompanied by shocks so violent that I fell on the floor; then I heard a seaman exclaim, 'We are lost, lost! Pray for us!'

"We had just struck the reef, and the ship parted in two; the water rushed into the hold; we could hear it bubbling. The soldiers, who slept upon deck, sought shelter or safety where they could, filling the air with cries; the passengers, half-naked, darted from their cabins; the poor women clung to everybody, beseeching and imploring help; they uttered prayers to God aloud, they bade one another farewell. A merchant loaded his pistol, and was about to blow out his brains; but his arm was arrested, and the weapon taken from him. The shocks continued; the alarm-bell rang forth its peals, but the wind roared so frightfully that they could not be heard at fifty yards off. Cries, and groans, and prayers were blended together; the whole scene was indescribably frightful, painful, awful; I have never seen, nor read of, anything so horrible and heart-

breaking. To stand there, full of life and health, in the face of what seemed certain death,—and a cruel, a dreadful death !At this crisis, the vicar, M. Moisset, gave us all the benediction. The tearful voice of the poor priest, recommending to God's mercy the two hundred and fifty unfortunate creatures whom the sea was about to devour, moved every heart. Nearly at the same moment the ship heeled completely over on the right side, and the water poured in floods into the dining-saloon and the cabins. We were all thrown headlong in the same direction. The water was up to our shoulders ; we had to swim to the railings of the gangway that led to the deck ; then not a single cry was heard, for everybody took care of himself as best he could without a word or a groan.

“ When I reached the bottom of the gangway, I perceived Dogny swimming near me. We both ascended ; but, on reaching the top, the doorway was closed, and we heard a shout—‘ Beware, the main-mast is falling ! ’ The men cut away at it with vigorous blows, but a wave soon carried off those engaged in the task.

“ At the summit of the gangway was a small drum of sheet-iron, covering the entrance. There were two skylights in this roof. The door being shut, we were unable to force it, and Dogny said to me, ‘ We are lost ; the water is rising in the gangway ! ’ Thrusting my head through the skylight, I saw Roux, Godard, and Weber seated on the top of the drum, and holding on as best they could. They caught sight of me, and cried, ‘ Quick, Vérette, quick ! climb through the skylight ; we are lost ! ’ They dragged at me lustily, and so successfully that I got clear, and Dogny afterwards. All five of us were then huddled together in a space which would have been sufficiently cramped for three—behind us, the furious sea ; before us, the sea also ! In a minute or two we heard

an outburst of shrieks ; the whole fore part of the vessel fell away, and sank suddenly,—carrying with it a score or so of souls. Then, all was silence !

“The night was very dark, and the waves so phosphorescent that they flung their spray upon us like a rain of fire. I have never seen anything like it. The waters washed over the deck with indescribable fury, sweeping away every person who had no holdfast ; we could hear them coming in the distance, and, when they arrived, we lowered our heads, and clung together closely. Some were so violent that we feared lest the drum of the gangway should crack, and involve us in its ruin. Weber said to me, ‘Vérette, we are going to die ; but in case one of us should escape, let us swear to write a line to our families without a moment’s delay.’

“We clasped hands more than ten times, bidding one another farewell. The waves no longer allowed us a moment’s rest. They beat against our back ; eyes and mouth were full of water. When a billow swept the deck, we could see it detach some one from the shuddering, frightened groups, and impel him down the slippery incline. The poor creature cried, ‘O my friends !’ The billow receded, and its burden with it ; that was all. Others exclaimed, ‘Support me ! Hold me ! I am losing my footing—I am lost !’ A controller of customs saw his wife borne off by a wave ; she had her eighteen months old child in her arms. Unable to hold her, he leaped into the sea, exclaiming, ‘We will die together !’ The vicar, M. Moisset, slipped close beside me ; I stretched out to him my hand, but he missed it, and clung to the leg of my trousers ; the cloth gave way in his hands, and the waves had their victim !

“About three o’clock in the morning we attempted to quit our refuge, and to crawl along the side of the wreck which lay above water ; but, to do this, it was necessary to cross a space



WRECK OF THE "BORYSTHENES."

of ten to thirteen feet, ascending an almost vertical slope, which was as slippery as if it had been greased ! We found it impossible to effect such an escalade, and all the more because forced to climb in the space between a couple of the yards. A rope was thrown to us, which we passed round our bodies ; and the soldiers, who had succeeded in getting astride of the bulwark out of the water, hauled up each of us in his turn. One of the soldiers recognized me when my turn came. ‘What ! is it you, major ? Give me your hand, hold firm, and let yourself go.’ He dragged me up, and after me, Dogny, Roux, Godard, and Weber. We then constructed with a rope a kind of gangway, for at about sixty yards from us rose the great rock against which our ship had been hurled. The rope was intended to serve as a flying-bridge to reach this asylum.

“By nine o’clock in the morning everybody was on the rock : we counted our muster, and found that seventy were missing,—that is, dead. As the sea flung their bodies upon the rock, we took off their shoes, and gave them to those of us who were barefooted. Then we kindled a fire with the planks of the shattered boats, and hoisted some white handkerchiefs upon tall poles, in the hope of being discovered and rescued. The rock formed a small island, without soil, completely barren, and very precipitous ; there was no water to drink, and nothing to eat. Perishing with cold, soaked to the bone, and scarcely able to hold ourselves erect,—so great was our exhaustion,—we suffered terribly ! At length, towards noon, a bark, manned by Spanish coral-hunters, perceived our signals and the smoke of our bivouac ; it approached, and threw us a bag of sea-biscuits, bread, and tobacco, and then proceeded towards Oran to carry thither the news of the shipwreck.

“In the afternoon rain fell. We placed in the hollows and clefts of the rock all our women, children, and invalids, to protect them from the storm ; and the soldiers lent their

cloaks to those who had rushed from their cabins in their night-attire. We spent the night on the rock, crouching round the fires which we had kindled. During these two days we slept in the open air, warming ourselves with dry herbs and the broken spars of the ship, and quenching our thirst with the rain and sea water that had collected in the crannies of the rock.

“Finally, on Sunday the 17th, at two A.M., five Spanish barks made their welcome appearance. We embraced one another, we flung ourselves into each other’s arms ; we were saved ! The women, children, and sick were first embarked, and then the remainder in due order.

“At one o’clock in the afternoon we entered the port of Oran, where an immense crowd awaited us on the quay. Everybody stretched their arms towards us ; the men waved their hats in the air, and the women their handkerchiefs. We were dressed in the most fantastic attire. One lady, for instance, wore a soldier’s cloak, while her husband had wrapped his feet in fragments of a torn pair of trousers. For myself, I had my tunic, but instead of a kepi, a handkerchief twisted round my head ; my boots, like those of every other person, were ruined with sea-water, and exposed my toes ; my pantaloons had been torn by the poor priest who was drowned ; and I could not support myself on my legs when I was carried ashore. I was stupefied, and felt as if in a dream.”

Such is the story of the wreck of the *Borysthenes*.

XLIII.

LOSS OF THE "LONDON."

January 1866.



THE screw-steamship *London*, bound for Melbourne, dropped down the Thames from Gravesend, on Saturday, December the 30th, 1865. She was comparatively a new vessel, having made only two voyages; was built of iron, 1428 tons register, with an auxiliary screw of 200 horse-power, very loftily sparred and ship-rigged, clipper or modern build, long and narrow, and famous for her speed. She was commanded by Captain Martin, who bore a high repute as a gentleman, a skilful sailor in every sense of the word, and a navigator of great experience.

The day was fine as she steamed down the Thames, and about sunset she dropped anchor at the Nore. The barometer, however, denoted unsettled weather, and the following day was so cold and stormy that the ship remained at anchor until Monday morning, the 1st of January, when the clouds had cleared away and the wind subsided. The *London* then resumed her voyage, and steamed merrily down the Channel. She passed Dover about four P.M. During the night the wind again rose; and on Tuesday the weather was dull, heavy, and variable. About ten the Isle of Wight was

sighted ; the weather still boisterous, and the indication of the barometer most inauspicious. Captain Martin, therefore, took shelter at Spithead, and about four P.M. anchored opposite to Ryde. The next morning was fine, but the wind ahead, and the sea heavy. However, he weighed anchor, and at noon steamed through the narrow passage of the Needles into the open Channel.

Between eight and nine A.M. on Thursday the 4th, the *London* was off Plymouth, waiting for a pilot. A fishing-smack, with three men and two boys, ran up to her, and launched a little boat, intending to board her, and pilot her into harbour. Two men got into her,—a violent sea running at the time.

“In a few minutes after casting off,” says one who was on board the *London*, “I saw that the little boat did not rise on the wave: presently I saw the heads of the two men rise up on a wave, and could see that their boat was upset. At that moment I heard Mr. Harris, the chief mate of our ship, give orders to man a life-boat. Soon the men were in it ready for lowering, but there was a great delay in consequence of the lowering-gear not being in proper order. The detention was truly painful. Occasionally the two heads would appear, then down again, expecting every time to be the last. Presently our boat got up to where they were. We could see them pick up one man, then row about looking for the other; but the poor fellow had sunk only two or three minutes before they got to the spot.”

This sad accident was not unnaturally regarded as an evil omen. However, a pilot-boat soon made her appearance; a pilot came on board: and at noon the *London* was safely anchored inside of Plymouth breakwater.

Here she remained, taking on board passengers and goods, until late on Friday night; when, in defiance of the well-

known superstition of seamen, Captain Martin put out to sea. The next day was fine. Sunday and Monday were rough, yet not so rough as to excite any alarm on board a well-found and first-class ship. At this time a muster seems to have been made of the crew and passengers, and it was found that they numbered two hundred and fifty-two, of whom one hundred and sixty-three were passengers. It was supposed that there were also a few stowaways on board, who had not yet emerged from their hiding-places ; of these there may have been six.*

In order to preserve a greater *vraisemblance* in our account of what afterwards took place, we shall henceforth use the first person, as if we ourselves had been on board the ill-fated *London*. And frequently, indeed, we shall adopt the very language of one who sailed in her, but happily escaped with his life when she was wrecked.

The next morning we were out of sight of land: we had left it in the night. I asked one who was up at the time of starting, helping to heave the anchor, what was the time: he said, about twelve. This day, Saturday, was very pleasant; but as the wind was ahead the ship rolled considerably, and the coal-sacks piled on deck rolled down, and nearly killed a little boy. The passengers now came out of the cabins, and began to make acquaintance with each other. On the following day, Sunday, the weather increased in severity; the wind was strong, and the rain fell in torrents. In the afternoon, a clergyman from the after or chief saloon—the Rev. Mr. Kerr—read prayers in the second-class cabin, and delivered a short sermon or exhortation, though suffering from sea-sickness.

* See the striking narrative of the "Loss of the Steamship *London*," in the *Cornhill Magazine* for January 1866, p. 41.

Divine service was held in the chief saloon, in the morning, by Dr. Wolly.

Monday, the 8th, came in a little more agreeably ; that is, the sun occasionally brightened up the scene, though the wind was still strong ahead. The ship's position at noon was latitude $46^{\circ} 40'$ N., and longitude $7^{\circ} 10'$ W. She had entered the ill-omened waters of the Bay of Biscay.

Whilst the passengers were at tea in the evening, the ship began to roll, and shipped a great deal of water, which soon found its way through the skylight, and rained upon our heads. Soon after, we shipped another heavy sea, or rather dipped it in out of the Bay of Biscay ; and it poured in a torrent down the hatchway, causing quite a scene of consternation among the ladies, many of whom screamed out, "Oh, we are sinking !" while others exclaimed, "Shut down the lid of the hatch !" One man, who had come home in the ship from Melbourne, said, "Oh, you must not mind this, it is an old trick of the *London*. And more than that, if the lids of the hatch are shut down, they will not prevent the inrush of the water, for they are not made properly ; the sides of the covering of the hatch don't fit close to the combings, and also the water floats up to the lids, and comes down nearly the same as though there were none !" Which, indeed, was true.

After a time the water upon deck subsided. Then the men were called upon to fall to and bail the water in buckets out of the state-room, so as to save the clothes of the passengers from being injured. This toilsome task was continued nearly all the night.

When daylight once more dawned upon us, we learned that the wind was still blowing right ahead ; the sky was heavy with clouds and mists ; and though the *London* was under steam, she made but little progress.

About ten o'clock I once more went upon deck, and found

that the jib-boom had been carried away, and the fore-royal-mast broken in two, and hanging down. Soon afterwards, the foretop-gallant-mast was carried away, and next the foretop-mast; and on that same day of misadventures the main-royal-mast went overboard.

On the whole, however, the earlier part of the day was rather pleasant. I remember that the sun was shining when I went on deck to see the wreck of the foretop-mast. But as the day advanced, and it drew towards evening, the wind increased in violence, and the ship laboured grievously. There was every sign of a wild, fierce night. Many who had hitherto preserved their composure, now began to express some alarm, and to doubt whether the captain was justified in forcing his ship in the teeth, as it were, of a head sea. We had several passengers on board who had been sailors,—experienced veterans, well acquainted with their craft. One of these, I remember, was named John Hickman, and came from Ballarat, in Australia. He told me that he had voyaged in numerous vessels, and knew something about ships and the sea; but he had never seen one behave like the *London*. She frightened him; he did not know what to make of her. Similar opinions were expressed by others.

By seven or eight o'clock matters grew worse, and the gale blew furiously. One of the life-boats, insecurely fastened, was carried away—lifted out of the davits by the sea. Shipping a deal of water, our hatches had to be closed; but nothing could prevent the water coming in, and by nine o'clock all was confusion and terror in our second-class cabin: ladies clinging to you, and beseeching you to stay beside them; some of them in their rooms reading and praying, but the majority out in the open cabin. Fear at this time was not confined entirely to the females. Most of the men had dread on their faces. I myself began to feel very uneasy.

Indeed, that night was really terrible, but the next was worse. The ship was nigh hove to ; and oh, how she did roll ! It was no gentle, undulating motion ; she would roll on her side until you were in doubts of her ever coming up again. Then she would come up with a jerk ; and when she did rise there was a general displacement of boxes, trunks, chairs, buckets, and other movable articles, placed on board in confusion at Gravesend and Plymouth. We could see now that we had more than the dangers of a gale to contend with. It was quite evident that our ship was deeply, if not over laden. She was a ship built for speed, and of great length for her breadth,—belonging to a class of vessels that cannot be loaded with safety in proportion to her tonnage, like those of the old style. She was perhaps safe enough when properly loaded, with less top-hamper, not so heavily sparred, and properly equipped. And besides, it was the prevailing opinion on board that she was not prepared for a gale. It appeared as if she had been forced to sea in a hurry, and there was confusion above deck as well as below. The crew were not used to the ship ; many were foreigners, and did not know English. Work was always ahead. I noticed a want of regularity and discipline in the ship. I say this with no desire to throw discredit on any one, or insinuate that the loss of the ship was at all attributable to this cause ; but I think it will all tend to show that there was not sufficient preparation, or that proper regard to life at the outset that there ought to have been ; yet I feel fully convinced that had the same gale overtaken us two months later, the *London* would not have succumbed to it as she did.

About two o'clock in the morning (Wednesday), I went to my room and had a short sleep, the last I had in the *London*. When I awoke I found a slight improvement in the cabin—not so much water coming down, and the ship rolling

less. She had been put round an hour before to return to Plymouth, and was running close-hauled.

When daylight came in, the wind had somewhat abated, but the sea was very heavy. I went on deck at nine in the morning. The most of this day the crew were engaged in getting aboard the wreck of the boom, for what purpose I never understood. As it was, it proved a source of trouble to us: it was lashed that afternoon just alongside of the engine-room skylight, and at night, when the gale increased, it got loose from its lashings and was knocking about, there always being a deal of water on the deck; and by the action of it and the sea the skylight over the engine-room was carried away, which was the immediate cause of the ship's loss.

The whole of the day was dull and gloomy: heavy cross seas—the ship labouring—no comfort anywhere. Darkness came on early; the wind increased; the sky looked wild; everything bespoke a terrible night: and the anxious countenances of all betokened forebodings of danger.

At length night set in. Hatches were closed down and fastened on the inside to prevent the water from floating them up. But still the water came in—first one side, then the other—with every roll. By seven or eight o'clock we were in as great a state of terror as on the previous night; and with more cause, for the gale was more violent. The steam was so troublesome that we could not open the lids for a moment to let in the air. The sensation in the cabin then was really awful; I never shall be able to convey an idea of it. Imagine what your feelings would be, waiting and expecting every moment to meet death. Add to that the dismal sound of water rushing in. You could not see it through the cloud of steam and dim lights, and were not sure whether the ship was filling or not. In fact, a foot of water washing to and fro, carrying away every movable article, strengthened

your fear that she was. Then at every heavy roll a woman shrieked. There was one young girl nearly frantic. By nine o'clock we were in worse state than ever. When the ship rolled there would be nearly two feet of water in the cabin. It would come in with a rush; then back again to the other side, carrying with it everything that was not lashed.

So the evening wore on—all of us more or less alarmed.

About ten o'clock the purser of the ship came into our cabin. I spoke to him about the water being there. "Oh," he said, "you have nothing to complain of. We are just as bad aft; we have been carrying it out of the state-room all the evening." I said it was very wrong that it should be there, when it could be so easily prevented by securing the hatches; not on account of the danger, but for the comfort of the passengers. They had had plenty of warning—last night was nearly as bad. He said—"There is no danger in it; it runs aft to the engine-rooms, and is pumped." But what was the consequence? Its weight all told on a heavily-laden ship; it all tended to bring her deeper in the water. In a few minutes later the fires were out—the engines stopped. What use were their pumps then, and where was the water? Still there.

While the purser and I were talking, there came some sailors and rushed past us, going to the room where the sails were kept. I heard one say to another, "Let us make haste with a sail, or she will sink." At that moment I heard an order from one of the sailors that all men were wanted at the poop. I knew this applied to the passengers, and felt there must be something very serious now. Immediately we left to go aft, leaving the women alone: only a few men having children remained behind, their wives begging them not to go. In getting there we had to grope our way through a long dark passage, say sixty or eighty feet in length, and

over the top of the stores, luggage, &c., that were piled in some places within two feet of the deck. Once through, and in passing the engine-room, we could see that there was water rushing down. I hurried by to get up to the poop, the place we were ordered to. There a dismal sight presented itself, and one I shall never forget.

The gale was at its height. The night was very dark ; but from lights held at the cuddy windows to give light on the deck in front, and which reflected up the main-mast, could be seen the half of the main-topsail still standing, and the other half blown away, the shreds blown straight out at right angles with the yard by the force of the wind. The winds whistling through the wire rigging produced a fearful sound. Waves lashed the sides of the ship—now and then breaking over her, she laying over very much. There was a boiling foam level with the railings ; and a little further off could be seen seas ten or fifteen feet above us, with a phosphorescent crest shining through the dark. While standing there, viewing this scene of wild fury, and supporting myself by the companion-way, others were coming up the steps. So I let go my hold, and reached across to catch hold of a railing round the screw-shaft or opening, where it was drawn up out of the water when disconnected ; but I found nothing to hold on by but a smooth wall. All at once I found myself sliding down to leeward, and nothing to prevent me going over the low iron railing into the boiling foam below, when suddenly I caught hold of something in the dark that brought me up. No one but myself knew what a narrow escape I had. Even to the present day it sends a thrill through me when I think of it.

Soon after getting on the poop I saw there was nothing to be done there, and with the others went down again. I then repaired to the cuddy, which was well lit up. It was full of people. There was a clergyman praying at the time very

fervently, and all joined in with deep and earnest Amens. It was a solemn and pathetic moment.

As soon as prayers were over, I heard one of the officers order more lights to be held to the windows to enable the men to see how to secure the engine-room hatch. I got two swing-lights from the after part of the cuddy, and took them to the windows. Afterwards I went below between decks to assist with the sails. As I passed along by the engine-room I heard Mr. Greenhill, the chief engineer, sing out to the fore-men below to come up. Soon I saw three men come, who said, "It's useless to try any longer; the fires are out, and the water up to our middle." It was then proposed that the passengers should get buckets, and pass up water from between decks, as every little would lighten, though two were coming in for one taken out. Buckets were accordingly produced, and fifty to sixty men were soon employed in passing along buckets of water. Some time after—say half-past one o'clock (Thursday morning, the 11th)—the captain came to us and said, "Men, put down these buckets, and come and try to secure the engine-room hatch, for that is the only chance to save the ship." Immediately some one sung out, "More sails wanted." And a very large one was brought; the last one of the lot, as I was told. It was very heavy, and they had great difficulty in getting it along. The sails were kept in a stow or state room, on the starboard side abaft the main-mast. They could not be taken aft by the passage-way on that side of the ship, as it was blocked up with freight or luggage; consequently they had to be taken forward around the main-mast, and down the passage-way to the port side, where there was just room enough left to crawl over. And here the detention was,—a truly painful one at that time. As the sail was thus delayed, some persons came down to ascertain the cause. First the captain, "What is detaining

you ? hurry it along !”—then Mr. Tycehurst, the second lieutenant, “Hurry up that sail !” Next came another officer, shouting, “For God’s sake, bring along that sail, or the ship will sink !”

At length the sail was got over (I think the passage-way had to be cleared first), and through on to the deck, where about fifty men assisted to put it where it was required, and where already a pile of them had been accumulated three feet high. The one we had brought up was spread over all the others, and nailed to the deck on the lee-side with considerable difficulty.

Going below again, I joined the ranks of those who were passing buckets of water. Presently Mr. Grant, one of the junior officers, came round, raising volunteers for the pumps. He was not very successful : the men did not shrink from the work, but they dreaded going on deck, for the night was dark and cold, and the danger was great of being washed overboard. Though I did not dread it less than they, I consented. On my way up I observed that the stern-ports on the starboard side were knocked in, affording a free ingress for the water ; later in the morning those on the port side were also stove.

Once on deck, what a miserable scene was before me ! The water swirled around and about me, up to my knees. The wind blew like a blast from the icy regions. The night was intensely dark. At the pumps I found about a dozen, two of whom—Mr. Angel and Mr. Grant—were officers. I set to work as best I could. The seas broke over us so roughly that sometimes I was up to the neck in water. At such moments the pumps would have to stop ; but no sooner had the wave receded than Mr. Angel would sing out cheerily, “Round with the pumps ; keep them going.”

Day came at last, and the weather was still very dull and

uncertain. The wind was not so furious, but the sea rolled very heavily. A few now talked about the boats—or rather, of those remaining—but not with much hope that they would prove useful. One of the cutters was still uninjured; and there were also two iron pinnaces, capable of carrying thirty persons each, and a small wooden boat forward near the fore-castle. An attempt was accordingly made to make ready the starboard pinnace, but she was swamped in lowering her, and sank. It was obviously useless to repeat the attempt with the other boats.

At this time people were slowly pacing the deck, very quiet, though very anxious. Several ladies were bare-headed, their hair blown about by the wind; but they too exhibited the calmness of resignation. It was probably out of pity for them that some sailors began to get the port-cutter ready; but from want of discipline among the crew and firmness on the part of the officers, this benevolent intention was frustrated, and the seamen took the boat, so to speak, into their own possession.

“The facts of the case,” says the authority I have been following, “were, as I afterwards learned, that after the first boat swamping in the morning, there seemed not much chance of any getting lowered and cleared from the ship with safety. But a few of the sailors were evidently men who knew what could be done with a boat at sea, and agreed among themselves to fit out this boat, and have a trial for their lives. They got her ready with oars, compasses, buckets, bailer, life-buoys, biscuits, &c. The captain may have directed, but I never understood so; and for the half-hour or more that I was on deck at the last, I did not see him interfere, and I was near the boat all the time. So when I saw how matters stood with regard to this boat, I then and there determined to get into her if possible. Once that boat is in the water, thought

I, I will jump in, and I don't think they will put me out. Presently I saw a sailor step over, and get in the stern of the boat, which was still hanging in the davits. He was one of those who had helped to prepare her, and one I knew by sight, the only one on board. Our acquaintance was very slight, and made by chance. When on my way [by rail] from Fenchurch Street to Tilbury, he got in at Stepney, and sat on the same seat with me; and from that circumstance we spoke once or twice on board. I then went up to the side of the ship, and spoke to him in a free, sailor-like way. Though not a seafaring man myself, I had been thrown during my life very much amongst sailors, and fancied I understood them pretty well, and knew their dislike to ceremony or to a line of distinction being drawn between them and the rest of society; so I asked him in an off-handed manner, wishing to establish a fellow-feeling. It had the desired effect. He said, 'Yes, but take your chance when she is in the water,'—which was all I wanted; for if I had been allowed to have got in before, I think I would not, as I was afraid she might upset in the lowering, as the first did. I soon found that my plan for gaining a favour was at that time decidedly the best, as I heard men beseeching of them to let them go, also offering large amounts of money. The answer was, 'We don't want your money.' When my friend the sailor gave me permission to go, I thought of the ladies, and asked myself the question, Am I robbing them of any chance they might have? and said to my friend in the boat, 'Well, I do not like going and leaving these behind'—pointing to some that were standing near the mizzen-mast. He said, 'I am as sorry as you, but it can't be helped—try and save yourself;' which nerved me, and also showed to me the impossibility of saving any, unless they jumped after the boat was lowered."

But it is both painful and unnecessary to dwell any longer on these minute details. Just as the good ship was settling down, the boat pushed off; her crew pulled a stroke or two; a billow hid them for a moment from the unfortunate *London*; then they rose on the crest of the wave, and, behold, she was no more to be seen! With all the precious lives on board—



FOUNDERING OF THE "LONDON."

with all their associations of love and happiness—with all their memories of the past and anticipations of the future—she had gone down, and her place knew her no more!

The company in the boat—which was about twenty-five feet long and six wide—consisted of three engineers, one fireman, one young midshipman, one carpenter, eight seamen, one steward, one boy, and three passengers. For provisions they had about fifty pounds of biscuit, three bottles of brandy, and a bottle of champagne. The wind was still very strong

and cold, and the sea troubled ; and it might well be doubted whether the same fate would not befall the boat that had befallen the *London*. To keep her afloat, all hands except the oarsmen were employed in bailing ; and the exposure and fatigue soon told heavily upon them.

The night passed, however, without any accident, and the dawn of day seemed to bring with it fresh strength and revived hope. About seven o'clock they caught sight of a distant ship, which they hailed with a terrible shout,—a roar of agony and desperation and delirious expectation, that rose high above the roar of sea and wind, and was heard by those whom it was intended to reach. Some hours elapsed before the vessel discovered their boat, labouring as she did in the trough of the sea. Then she bore down upon them—an Italian bark, the *Marianopolis*, Captain Gion Batta Cavassa—and took the sufferers on board. They were received with the most cordial hospitality ; and on the following Tuesday, with an emotion which it is impossible to describe, landed safely on the quays of Falmouth.

And this is the true story of the loss of the *London*.

XLIV.

LOSS OF THE "EVENING STAR."

October 2, 1866.



THE *Evening Star* was a fine American steamer on the route from New York to New Orleans; and like most, if not all, of the American "home-boats,"—if we may use the term,—she was not only well built, but handsomely equipped, and her internal appointments were not inferior to those of a luxuriant drawing-room. All was done on board of her that could be done to render a sea-trip enjoyable and delightful; and she resembled rather a huge pleasure-galley, designed to float on some enchanted lake, than a trading-vessel, bound on an Atlantic voyage. This character was maintained by the nature of her freight in September 1866. For besides a large number of ordinary passengers, military men, merchants and their families, and Southern planters, she carried a French opera company, engaged for the winter season at New Orleans; a troupe of "negro serenaders," with their banjos, bones, blackened faces, and grotesque attire; and, alas! about one hundred of those unhappy women who waste their lives in sin and dissipation, and drink that cup of pleasure which is fraught with the deadliest poison.

Nearly three hundred passengers were on board the *Even-*

ing Star, when that splendidly-appointed but notoriously unseaworthy vessel steamed out of New York harbour, on the 27th of September 1866. We say "notoriously unseaworthy," for it was well known that her condition unfitted her for a long sea voyage; and it is difficult to understand how her owners could send her forth, or how men could be found to embark in her. Many must have been acquainted with the rotten state of her timbers. Did they trust to chance, with that reckless disregard of life so common among the modern Americans? Or to the steamer's six life-boats and her hundred and eighteen life-preservers? Or did the probability of a disaster never occur to their minds?

For some days, however, nothing occurred to justify gloomy forebodings, if any such were entertained. With a bright blue sky, and a moderate breeze, the *Evening Star* went merrily on her way towards the genial and radiant South. The voyage was like a dream of pleasure: music and dance, laughter and merry jest; the negro minstrels telling their quaint anecdotes, and singing their characteristic melodies; the operatic artists repeating their favourite airs; young men and women whispering "sweet nothings" in each other's ears; and even the grave Yankee trader or anxious Southern planter catching the general infection, and contributing to the general amusement. Every evening the main-deck presented the appearance of a brilliant ball-room, or gay promenade, and all went merry as a marriage-bell. The "painted ship" seemed to float idly on a "painted ocean;" and probably few voyages have been performed under similar conditions of ceaseless and almost frantic amusement and revelry.

On the 1st of October, the steamship passed Cape Hatteras, and still the sea was smooth, and still the sky was bright.

But on the 2nd a change came over "the spirit of the scene." The delightful calm gave way to a strong wind, and,

towards evening, the strong wind increased to a violent gale. Clouds gathered rapidly and ominously in the horizon; the sea began to roll in heavy billows; the waves tossed their salt spray over the deserted deck. There was every sign of a coming hurricane; and the captain and his crew made the necessary preparations to meet its fury. They secured the boats and spars, placed the steadiest men at the helm, and took in every yard of canvas. A feeling of alarm had now hushed the songs and laughter of the passengers, and many a white lip trembled as it questioned the captain, "Is danger at hand?" His reply was always cheerful and encouraging, and yet the inquirer went away anxious, dissatisfied, unhappy.

At this time the ship was nearly two hundred miles from the nearest shore. She laboured heavily in the trough of the sea, which took away her paddle-box and bulwarks; and leaked so rapidly that torrents of water rushed into her hold and cabins. Then indeed the cheering words of the seamen fell on disregarding ears. The women rushed on deck, and sobbed and wept, and ceaselessly demanded if there were no hope of safety. The captain was compelled, as a measure of precaution, to send them below again, and fasten the doors of their cabins. Immediately afterwards, a furious billow crashed upon the ship, carrying away the hurricane-house, with two seamen and some of the passengers who were standing upon it. This was the beginning of the end. The work of destruction thenceforth went on rapidly. The wheel-house was swept into the waters; the rudder unshipped; plank after plank was stripped from the helpless hulk; the incoming waves extinguished the fires, and stopped the engines; and the sole hope of safety remaining lay in the continued action of the pumps.

But, before long, these were rendered useless by another

heavy sea, and the captain then resolved on casting overboard the cargo, though probably he did not hope much from the result. Accordingly, crew and passengers were summoned to the work.

It was noticed that the latter almost surpassed the seamen in the vigour and strenuousness of their efforts. The women, especially, laboured with almost frantic energy; and merchant and singer, negro minstrel and planter, old and young, all mingled together, hauled upon deck bale after bale, and trunk and chest and package, and heaved them into the whirling waters. Some there were, however, who took no part in the toil; either attiring themselves in their costliest costumes, and loading themselves with jewels, preparatory to embarking in the boats; or stealing into the store-room, seizing upon all the liquors they could find, and drinking themselves into a state of furious intoxication,—yet an intoxication which brought with it neither forgetfulness nor apathy, but rather deepened their apprehensions and quickened their sense of terror.

At length the captain, who had acted throughout with the manliest courage and most perfect self-reliance, was compelled to recognize the fact that the vessel could not be saved; and entering the chief saloon, where most of the passengers had now assembled, he informed them, in a few grave words, that he had done all his skill and experience could suggest, that all was in vain, and that the vessel could not float another hour. By some, and particularly by the Germans, the terrible information was received with dignified composure. The French and Italians gave way to the demonstrative passion which seems characteristic of the children of the South. Many of the women, in an agony of penitence or despair, tore off their jewels and costly garments, and flung themselves prostrate on the deck, or leaped overboard. Some rushed on

deck, gesticulating violently, shrieking, tearing their hair. Others drank deeper and still deeper; some cried, some sang, some blasphemed; while only a few sank on their knees in silence, and offered up to God their prayers for pardon and compassion. Here and there, husband and wife, or parents and children, collected in little groups, and, clasped in a last fond embrace, awaited the supreme moment.

The boats, meantime, were got clear, and preparations made for lowering them into the angry waters. As rapidly as possible, the passengers were embarked; but two, as soon as launched, were hurled back against the vessel's straining hull, and shattered into fragments.

It was now about six in the morning, and the daylight broke over an awful scene. While the crew were making an effort to launch two more of the boats, a tremendous billow advanced with irresistible march against the shuddering wreck. The hull was partly raised, and the sea then swept clear through the dismantled saloons; while the ship, giving a sharp quick quiver, as it were, from stem to stern, made a roll to port, then settled to starboard, and—sank! A moment more, and the waters were crowded with struggling wretches, and spars and planks tossed hither and thither on the swell; and loud shrieks and cries rose above the din of the tempest. Many of the sufferers were struck by the floating timbers, and killed immediately; others, after one or two unconscious or frantic efforts for preservation, disappeared beneath the waves; while others prolonged life for a few minutes by clinging to planks, gratings, broken spars, buoys, and pieces of furniture. Four of the life-boats belonging to the ship remained afloat, but were capsized as she went down. The passengers, however, clung to them with the desperation of men who felt it was their last chance, and as they were righted by the sailors, some succeeded in regaining their seats; others were lost, and

among them the captain, who surely deserved a better fate. After a succession of marvellous escapes, the four boats got clear of the wreck, and began to steer for the land. It was soon discovered, however, that they contained no provisions, and not even a cask of fresh water.

One of the boats contained the purser, chief-engineer, three passengers, and six seamen. A second carried three passengers, three seamen, the steerage steward, and the third mate. In the third boat were the pilot, assistant-engineer, four passengers, the cook, the butcher, and one of the firemen. The fourth held the second mate, and thirteen female passengers.

It is unnecessary to dwell upon the sufferings undergone by these poor creatures, without a drop of water to quench their thirst, without a morsel of food to sustain their strength, with nothing to protect them from the inclemency of the weather. The second mate's boat reached the coast of Florida, but was upset by the surf, and all the women perished. The first boat was picked up by the Norwegian bark *Fleetwing*, having lost one of her freight. The second arrived on the 7th at Fernandina, Florida, two of the passengers lying dead on board, the survivors being too weak to throw the dead bodies into the sea. The third boat was rescued by the *Morning Star* on the 8th, but had lost two passengers and two of the crew.

Thus, out of the two hundred and seventy-eight persons who left New York on the 27th of September, only twenty-four survived on the 9th of October; and thus the voyage of pleasure terminated in one of the saddest catastrophes recorded on the blood-stained pages of the book of human suffering.

XLV.

WRECK OF THE "JOHN BAPTIST."

March 17, 1867.



URING a voyage of three months and a half, the French three-master *John Baptist*, bound from Pisagua to Bordeaux, was incessantly assailed by storms and contrary winds. On reaching, in the middle of March, the latitude of the Azores, she was still pursued by the same unfortunate destiny, and her crew found themselves involved in a violent cyclone. Previously, as she doubled Cape Horn, she had sprung a leak in her hull; but, thanks to a powerful pump which she carried, the crew had contrived to keep her afloat. However, for some days the leak had been increasing, and to lighten the vessel, a part of its cargo had been thrown overboard. And now came this terrible tempest! We shall allow her captain to tell in his own simple way the touching story of the dangers which he and his men escaped almost, as it were, by a miracle:—

“At one o'clock in the morning of the 17th of March, a furious hurricane broke out. We took in our canvas, and kept the ship's head under the lower topsails. At eight o'clock the wind raged around us, and our masts and rigging

were all a wreck. The barometer had sunk to 28.11 inches. We succeeded in taking in our fore-topsail, and laboured constantly at the pumps. The sea showed symptoms of subsiding. Between noon and four o'clock all our nettings were carried away; heavy billows broke upon our decks as upon rocks; every hand was at the pumps, but it was impossible to keep them going: on descending into the hold I found the water was gaining rapidly upon us. At six o'clock, the fore-topmast-staysail, though quite new, was blown away, leaving only the bolt-ropes. The deck was swept clean of everything by the rushing waves, which carried away even the seamen's berths. The ship was sinking!

"We were lost. Seven feet of water in the hold! The gale tore into tatters my mizzen-topsail, and my main-topmast showed signs of yielding: our hour had come. But Providence watched over us. At sixty leagues to the eastward was a ship, caught like ours in the tempest; though lightly loaded, she was unable to resist its fury, and her captain resolved to put her before the wind. Since yesterday morning she had crossed the distance which separated us, and now appeared before us as a saviour, as our sole chance and hope of safety. I hoisted a signal of distress; and the *Léonie*, for such proved to be the name of the ship, commanded by Captain Broutelle, immediately manœuvred to get under the lee of the *John Baptist*. I took the opinion of my crew whether we should abandon our ship; and they all answered in the affirmative, as it was evident she would quickly founder.

"Then took place one of the grandest scenes it is possible to imagine. The hurricane still raged, and so tossed and lashed the sea that it was impossible to dream of lowering the boats. On the other hand, the ship sinking beneath our feet left me no alternative. The *Léonie* flung to us buoys and rope-ladders—everything she had on board that could

serve as a means of communication ; but we could not catch them. Seeing this, I resolved on a last means of safety : one of the boats was lowered, and after running the risk of being dashed a score of times against the ship's broadside, eight men succeeded in embarking, including my mate. They rowed off with the wind in their rear ; speedily disappeared and reappeared between the mountainous billows that separated the two ships ; then reached the leeward side of the *Léonie*, and I thought them saved. Shortly afterwards I saw the boat towing in her wake.

“ My anxiety was great, for I could not comprehend this manœuvre. I concluded that no one would venture to our succour. But, after a brief interval, they endeavoured to send the boat back to us by letting her run on the tow-rope. The operation failed ; and it became indispensable that they should endeavour to board us. The *John Baptist*, though half full of water, still answered her helm a little. I allowed her to bear away ; the *Léonie* did the same, so as to cross my bows. The manœuvre was almost successful, when an enormous billow caught the *Léonie* on her stern-quarters, and threw her into the wind. A collision seemed inevitable. I put the helm hard-a-port ; the ship did not answer, and fell upon the bows of the *Léonie*, breaking her jib-boom, carrying away her fore-top-gallant-mast, rending her fore-rigging, and tearing off the copper of her bulwarks. A few seconds more, and surely the ships would crash into and sink one another ! But Providence willed it otherwise, and they drifted apart.

“ At the moment of the collision two of my men had leaped on board the *Léonie*, and my crew was now reduced to four. The wheel was broken ; and the tatters of the gaff and the boom, which, as they hung down, lashed in the wind like the thong of a whip, prevented us from approaching the



WRECK OF THE "JOHN BAPTIST."

helm. Half an hour passed before I could cut away the ropes which entangled them on board.

"At length I was able to get at the helm, and I steered so as to rejoin the *Léonie*, which had drifted to leeward, and was already at a considerable distance. After an hour's patient effort, I found myself once more within two cable-lengths of the ship. Unfortunately, my boat had foundered, and I had lost all hope. There was still, however, a small gig on board the *Léonie*; and after a while I saw that preparations were made to lower her. These proved successful, and five men embarked, undauntedly braving every danger in a last effort to rescue us. They got under our lee; but there new difficulties and new dangers presented themselves. The *John Baptist* rolled like a cask; the waves swept over her from stem to stern; the hold was full of water; and one of my men was compelled to throw himself into the sea to reach

the boat. We all contrived at last to get on board of her, and immediately put her before the wind."

About one in the afternoon the rescued crew of the *John Baptist* stood on the deck of the *Léonie*, after a gallant seven hours' struggle against death. The *Léonie* for another twenty-four hours was beset by the storm; but the generous heroism of her commander was happily rewarded, and she weathered the gale in safety. On the 25th of March she arrived at Havre. It is pleasant to know that the proper authorities bestowed medals of honour on Captain Broutelle, and on the courageous fellows who had made the last and successful effort to take off the *John Baptist* her captain and his four companions.

XLVI.

WRECK OF THE "QUEEN OF THE SOUTH."

April 25, 1868.



THE year 1868 was remarkable for the violent storms which swept from the North Sea to the Mediterranean, and caused some lamentable disasters at sea.

On the 24th of April one of these tremendous gales was raging in the Channel, and blew with terrific fury in the estuary of the Loire.

It was about dusk when the *Queen of the South*, a fine three-masted ship of 1600 tons, arriving from Callao, in South America, after a voyage of one hundred and six days, dropped anchor between the island of Noirmoutiers and the dark headland of St. Gildas.

She had on board a crew of thirty-five men and officers, besides two women and five children as passengers; in all, forty-two.

At two o'clock on the following morning, the ship, after breaking one of her cables and driving over her second anchor, was forced upon the rocks. Here, among the wild battle of the waters, she was sorely shattered and strained. She leaked fearfully, and thinking she would sink at once or go to pieces, her crew and passengers, with the exception of

five men who preferred to share the fortunes of their storm-beaten bark, got into the boats, and endeavoured to make the shore. The billows, however, rolled too heavily ; no boat could live in such a sea ; every person perished.

Two of the five men who had remained on the ship now seized upon a stout spar, boldly leaped into the “yeasty waves,” and after a struggle which tested to the utmost their powers of endurance, succeeded in touching land at the point of St. Gildas. But just as he felt the firm ground beneath his feet, one of the adventurous couple, not having taken the precaution of fastening himself to his spar, was carried backward by a receding billow, in spite of the efforts of his comrade.

The three seamen left still on the wreck had taken refuge on the bowsprit, to which, though the waves constantly washed them, and the wind blew pitilessly in their faces, they clung with the resolution of despair. From this dangerous position they were rescued at length by Jean Elie Chantereau—the name of a brave man should always be had in honour !—master and owner of the lugger *Jeune-Marie-Désirée*.

The *Jeune-Marie* had left Saint-Nazaire at five in the morning for the port of Noirmoutiers, having on board Chantereau and his man, Pierre Alexis Guérin.

As they drew near St. Gildas, they caught sight of the stump of a mast rising some twenty-five feet above the surface of the water. They bore down towards the wreck in order to reconnoitre, and soon distinguished in the gray light of the dawn the signals of distress hoisted by the English seamen. Violent as were both sea and wind, Chantereau, without a moment's hesitation, without giving a thought to the danger he was incurring, lowered his canvas, in order to render assistance to the castaways.

He brought the lugger close to leeward of the wreck, and

flung a rope to one of the seamen, named Hoey, who proceeded to fasten it in succession round each of his companions, they being in no condition to help themselves. The manœuvre, however, was not at first successful; and an hour and a half passed before the three men, two of whom were insensible, could be got on board the lugger. Chantereau administered some stimulants, and when all had recovered from the effects of their long exposure, attired them in dry warm clothing, hoisted sail, and ran through the boiling sea to Noirmoutiers, where he landed them in safety.

A few days later, he and his crew of one man received the following letter of well-merited thanks, which was also published in the French journals:—

“Before returning to our country, we desire once more to express to you our very earnest gratitude for your noble and heroic conduct, which made you risk your lives and property to save us from a certain death, by coming to look for us upon the wreck of the English vessel *Queen of the South*, lost at St. Gildas on the night of the 24th.

“Words are powerless to render fitly our sentiments of profound gratitude; but, like ourselves, you are sailors, and you know all the dangers and the perils which we incur continually in our profession. You will understand, therefore, and will accept this sincere expression of thanks which we send to you from the depths of our heart.

“The sad and deplorable events of that night will never be effaced from our memory; but if anything could diminish our grief for those who perished, it is the generous action which you performed, and the truly Christian kindness you have lavished upon us.

“Comrades, we thank you for having rescued us from the certain death which awaited us; and to which our captain, his wife and their four children, a female passenger and her child, and more than thirty officers and seamen succumbed.—Your grateful and most devoted,

“JOHN BOYLE, *second mate.*

“HENRY REEVES, *lieutenant.*

“WILLIAM HOEY, *seaman.*”

In public acknowledgment of his generous courage, Chantereau was named a Knight of the Legion of Honour, while his sailor Guérin received a gold medal of the first class.

XLVII.

ADVENTURES OF THE "JUNO."

April to November, 1868.



THE *Juno*, a French frigate of the first class, under the command of Captain de Marivault, which had been despatched by the French Government to cruise in the Indian and Chinese Seas, touched at the island of Réunion late in the month of April 1868. She quitted the roadstead of St. Paul on the 28th, and sailed for Singapore.

During her cruise, her officers had been giving much attention to the subject of cyclonic storms. They had specially studied the very valuable book by Bridet, a distinguished French meteorologist, "*Etude sur les Ouragans de l'Hémisphère Austral*," which dwelt particularly on the atmospheric phenomena of the seas the *Juno* was navigating. In a letter which her captain addressed to M. Bridet, he bore high testimony to its usefulness. "A first general effect," he says, "which I ought to put on record is, that all my staff, impressed by their perusal of your pages, have made it, since we entered the Indian Ocean, the frequent subject of their conversations and discussions, and in this way gained a thorough understanding of the phenomena we were about to observe. The storm-chart was in everybody's

memory, and everybody was familiar with the examples cited ; consequently, when the moment for action came, no explanation was necessary, and there was none of that hesitation which too often occurs when we do not thoroughly understand the orders we are called upon to execute ; none of those doubts which overshadow the countenance when one is compelled to call to mind ill-digested theories before one can be assured that what one is doing is the best that could be done. Everywhere, on the contrary, prevailed the mutual confidence and assured satisfaction of men who see, each moment, that the situation is thoroughly understood and mastered by processes which their mind instantaneously appropriates without having to reason them out. In these conditions, an order is simply a signal for action ; a word suffices to explain every thought ; and under so powerful an impulse, a crew carefully organized accomplishes marvels in the way of moral resistance and special work."

At this season of the year there was no very great probability that a cyclone would be encountered, or that they would have any opportunity of testing by experience the value of the theoretical knowledge they had acquired. Piddington, in his " Law of Storms," points out that in the month of May the cyclonic storms are four times less numerous than in the month of February, when they reach their maximum.

On the 30th of April, with the trade-wind blowing as usual from the south-east, the *Juno* steered to the east-north-east, a course which would have carried her to the right of the Cargados ; but the wind freshening in the evening, and the sea rolling heavily, her commander resolved to pass them on the left, and pointed her head directly north. A dense canopy of clouds overspread the sky ; the *Juno* necessarily took in some of her canvas ; but the barometer continued

steady from three to nine o'clock. No change was observed in the direction of the wind. The usual precautions, however, were taken; and the guns were lashed more securely in their places.

At ten o'clock the barometer had fallen, and for the next hour it continued to fall until it reached 30 inches. This indicated the character of the approaching tempest. The *Juno* was running into a cyclone, and her captain resolved to manœuvre accordingly.

The centre of the meteor, be it understood, is always found in a perpendicular line to the direction of the prevailing wind. Hence, on this occasion, it lay to the north-east of the frigate. The fixity of this direction was the more clearly indicated because the "movement of translation" was towards the *Juno*; and the storm rolled onwards with only a moderate speed, since the barometer fell but slowly. Captain de Mari-vault resolved on steering to the north-west, so as to cut the circle of the cyclone at its narrowest chord; and ordered the fires to be lighted so as to bring the steam-power to the assistance of the sails. As we shall see, the accident which occurred disappointed him in this expectation.

The frigate sped before the wind at the rate of ten knots an hour, in the midst of the deepest obscurity. As the sea rose higher and higher, she rolled tremendously, and the water dashed over the upper deck, and poured in through the port-holes.

At midnight it had risen so high in the engine-room, that a heavier lurch of the ship than ordinary extinguished all the furnaces, and loosened the plates of the flooring, which thenceforward projecting in every direction, rendered access to the fires almost impossible. It was only at intervals that sufficient pressure could be obtained to work the pumps. Frequently, the boiling water in the cylinders, escaping

through several chinks, increased the difficulty of the operation.

The wind continued to increase until a tempest blew. Its direction was always southerly; a fact indicating that the ship had made a notable progress in the centre of the cyclone. But her sails and rigging suddenly experienced very serious damage.

In a violent lurch to windward the main-mast broke; all the top-sails were carried away; even those which had been carefully furled were torn into ribbons; and the fore-sail afterwards burst with a crash like the explosion of a gun.

Arrested thus in her course before she had succeeded in clearing the area of the cyclone, the *Juno* was abandoned, like a hulk, to the mercy of a raging sea which rose all around her in mountainous waves. She heeled over on her starboard side, without being able to recover herself, and no longer answered her helm.

The safety of her crew, however, depended on her being again brought before the wind. No stay-sail held; a thick tarpaulin which it was attempted to hoist split into tatters; men were vainly massed together in the shrouds to afford a holdfast to the winds.

The carpenters already stood by ready to cut away the mizzen-mast, when two topmasts suddenly fell, and allowed the frigate to recover herself a little.

This, however, was but a brief respite. Inasmuch as the frigate no longer made any progress, the hurricane pressed rapidly upon her, its force augmenting every moment. There was not, however, any change in the direction of the wind.

The sea rose, it is scarcely an exaggeration to say, in foam-crested billows which fell with a heavy thud upon the frigate, so that she shivered from stem to stern, as in a spasm of terror. She had her gallery carried away, and lost all the

boats hanging to her sides and at the poop. A great anchor, torn from its fastenings, had crashed into a port-hole in the fore-quarters, and opened up a leak which the men found much difficulty in closing up with a barricade of hammocks.

Torrents of rain fell continually ; and all the efforts of the crew resolved into a desperate struggle to prevent the inroad of the waters. Stationed at the pumps and the chain-buckets, the men toiled unremittingly, with admirable confidence and the most satisfactory coolness.

The whirl and violence had lasted for seven hours, every hour augmenting the fury of the hurricane, when suddenly a death-like silence fell upon the scene,—a silence so absolute that it can be compared only to that which follows the explosion of a mine in a bastion just carried by assault. It was the *central calm*,—a calm sudden and strange, which produced an impression of astonishment rather than of security, as if one felt one's-self placed outside the ordinary laws of nature. The movement of the whirlwind continued in the upper part of the air-column, the base of which was occupied by the ship. Birds, fish, grasshoppers, and shapeless *débris* of all kinds fell on every side, while the electric condition of the atmosphere affected the seamen with a novel vertiginous sensation, manifesting itself in the extraordinarily excited condition of men habitually composed, and even lethargic.

Numerous birds were detained within this kind of aerial gulf. Among them were found several waders, which, together with the insects and the vegetable remains, indicated that the cyclone had swept over some islands. A few of the flying-fish which fell on the deck of the *Juno* were alive ; others had been dead for some time, and gave off an unpleasant odour.

In a few plain words the captain made the crew acquainted

THE "JUNO" IN A CYCLONE



with the peculiarities of "the situation;" so that they understood equally with their officers the necessity of not losing a minute in the interval before they renewed their struggle with "the powers of air." They redoubled their activity at the pumps and chains; the topmen were told off to undertake the difficult and perilous task of seizing the wreck of the spars, which the lurches of the vessel set rolling from side to side. The main-yard, which swung round the mast in formidable circles, was, after desperate efforts, lowered upon deck. It was necessary also to secure the fore-topmast and the yard of the fore-topsail, which hung over the side, their rigging intertangled with the ropes and shrouds below. Much of this wreck, which it would have been easy to get rid of by a free use of the knife, but which it was desirable to preserve and utilize, was saved by the seamen, who rivalled one another in their devotion and daring.

In the engine-room the dangers were also very great. The plates of the flooring, and the tools, dashed by the waters in all directions, wounded the workers, and the continual discharges of hot water compelled the most robust to quit from time to time an irrespirable atmosphere.

At all hazards, however, it was indispensable to set in motion the pumps, and get rid of the water which prevented the fires from being lighted. The officers set the example of working in the boiling water. Success at length crowned their efforts, but chiefly owing to the heeling over of the frigate, caused by the accumulation in the bunkers; for this enabled a compartment of the furnace-room to be cleared more quickly.

After five hours of tranquillity, the first gusts of wind were felt, and, a few moments later, the hurricane in all its fury once more fell upon the frigate.

The squalls now came from the north-west, but not a single sail which had been hoisted would hold. Consequently it was impossible to manœuvre in order to escape the cyclone swiftly. The frigate lay passive in the midst of the violence of the storm, which, owing to its slow movement of translation, was likely to last for two whole days.

In the dangerous circle across which the frigate now drifted, that is, in the part of the cyclone where the velocities of translation and rotation react on each other, the agitation of the sea increased as well as the wind. The framework of the frigate was more and more loosened ; several signs of fracture were visible in the curves and bends ; but it was difficult to determine the real origin of everything which seemed to be a leak or water-way.

It was not until the 5th of May that the engines were able to work ; slowly at first, and with great precaution, but afterwards more rapidly. Captain de Marivault then resolved to make for the nearest port of refuge. Observation showed that the frigate was within ten leagues of Sable Island, an element of danger fortunately unknown to her crew and officers during the full wrath of the cyclone.

On the 6th she was put about for the Seychelles,* where she found at Mahé, in the midst of reefs of coral, a small and quiet port, in which the most urgent repairs were easily effected. A month later she arrived on the Cochin-China station, and found there the resources necessary for completing her equipment.

In the month of November following, a new experience was reserved for this same frigate in the regions she had so

* A group of about thirty islands and islets, in the Indian Ocean, lat. $3^{\circ} 40'$ to $5^{\circ} 35'$ S., and long. $55^{\circ} 15'$ to $56^{\circ} 10'$ E. The climate is warm, and some of the islands produce cotton, cocoa, tobacco, spices, and other tropical vegetation. Mahé, the largest island, is about 17 miles long and 4 miles broad.

recently visited. It may be noted that the season of typhoons had gone past, for in the Chinese waters they reach their maximum in the month of September.*

The cyclone of 1868 proved very unfortunate for the French navy, which lost two vessels: the *Juno*, now condemned by the engineers as unseaworthy; and the *Monge*, of the loss of which no doubt can any longer be entertained.

Both ships sailed from Saigon on the same day. The steamer started in the morning, but the frigate was compelled to wait for the evening tide.

In the voyage of the *Juno* nothing remarkable took place until she reached Cape Varella, which she sighted at nightfall on the 4th of November. During the day a fresh breeze had blown from the north-north-east.

The sea gradually grew more restless; the sky gathered up its clouds from all quarters of the horizon. Signs of an approaching gale were visible. Gusts of heat broke in upon an atmosphere perturbed and almost cold at intervals. Every person on board the frigate was sensible of electric influences of an unusual character. At four o'clock the barometer experienced its first fall; further, the wind thenceforth varied

* A few notes upon the typhoons of the preceding year will enable the reader to judge of the tremendous violence of these atmospheric phenomena. The frigate *La Guerrière* had been exposed to one in the last days of August. Her passage near the centre was indicated by the lowness of the barometer, which marked 28.150 inches; and thus, under the pitiless attacks of a wild and tempest-tossed ocean, she suffered very grave injuries. On September 8th, a typhoon swept over the island of Hong-Kong, the centre passing at a short distance from its northern shores. On the 9th, the Victoria roadstead presented a sad spectacle of desolation: on all sides were to be seen ships dismasted, aground, or hurled against one another. Two vessels foundered at anchor. For several days the dead bodies of numerous Chinese, who had been overtaken in their small and feeble boats, floated in the waters. Almost simultaneously, the eastern region of the Chinese Sea had been swept by a violent typhoon, which had also ravaged a part of the Philippine Islands. Torrents of rain flooded the low grounds in these islands; the high tide, swollen by the force of the wind, had made a raid upon their shores, and carried away entire villages, with their inhabitants. The storm proceeded evidently in a northerly direction, at the rate of twelve or thirteen miles an hour. Lastly, on the 1st of October, Hong-Kong, which had been so severely visited by a former hurricane, underwent a second and still more terrific; for this time it was the dangerous circle which passed over the island.

regularly from right to left, which is always considered a bad sign.

The *Juno's* log gives the following data:—From two to three o'clock—barometer 30.079 ; and wind north. From four to five o'clock—barometer 30 ; wind N.N.W., then N.W. ; a heavy sea. At six o'clock—barometer 29.764 ; wind N.W. ; sea falling. At seven o'clock—barometer, 29.449 ; gale from the west.

At eight o'clock in the evening the barometer marked its lowest—29.376. Several sails were taken in. But at half-past nine a serious accident occurred—the lashings of the helm gave way.

Previously the frigate had suffered little, because she had been steered so as to avoid the buffetings of the heavy seas, and the engines had been kept going at a moderate rate of speed. But now, without her helm, she was at the mercy of a tremendous sea. During a succession of violent rollings, the starboard boats and those at the stern were carried away. Happily, the frigate came round again to the wind, and bore up with tolerable steadiness against the billows for the short time the hurricane lasted.

At eight o'clock the barometer, as we have said, marked 29.376, the wind blowing from W.S.W. At midnight it rose to 29.766, and the wind veered to S.W. A progressive rise took place hour after hour, while the wind changed to the S., the S.S.E., and the S.E.

At the moment the helm broke, and during the lurches which followed, the water made its way into the frigate, both on the upper deck and by the stern chains, in such volumes as to excite apprehension. The boiler-fires were put out, and the scenes of the first cyclone renewed ; with this difference, however, that the crew, taught by an experience so roughly acquired, knew better what to do, and were strenuously

assisted by the sturdy arms of a hundred soldiers who were on board. "We will teach you the cyclone exercise," said the sailors gaily; and this liveliness, this energy, never failed for a single moment.

At daybreak the sea had fallen, and the water, entering no longer by the scuppers, was rapidly got under. The injuries sustained by the frigate were then investigated, and proved to be of more serious a character than had been imagined. All the outer part of the sheathing of the screw had disappeared. Through the clear blue water of the tranquillized sea could plainly be seen the enormous fracture of the stern-post—the great gap yawning beneath, and the screw completely exposed. But no discovery was made of the very grave circumstance revealed when the frigate was afterwards dry-docked—that with the stern-post had also gone a portion of the keel.

However, what was visible at sea sufficed to show that very considerable damage had been done to the ship's stern, and that at any moment a most dangerous leak might take place. It was resolved, therefore, to make the land as quickly as possible, and seek a port of refuge even at the risk of shipwreck. Preparations were immediately made for securing, in such an event, a sufficient supply of stores and provisions for a short sojourn on land. A temporary rudder was rigged up, and the frigate skirted the coast as far as Cape St. James. She then put into the Saïgon river, where she found the steamboat *Lucifer*, which towed her safely to the moorings she had previously occupied.

It is to be observed that the *Juno* was not long exposed to the influence of this cyclone. On entering it she found the wind blowing from the north, and her route was to the east. The rapidity with which the wind changed shows that its radius was small, and that the swiftness of the translation of

the meteor from S.W. to N.E. was very great. The *Monge* in all probability, was twenty to thirty leagues further north, and consequently must have passed through the centre. The unfortunate vessel, we may surmise, foundered beneath the mighty billowy masses that struck against her.

The neighbouring coasts were carefully explored by ships of war ; messengers brought news from the most various quarters ; but nothing was heard of the *Monge*. Further details showed the terribly destructive character of the storm. The sea, forcing back the rivers for considerable distances, swept in over the land for fully three miles, inundating a populous country, and overflowing the towns. It is estimated that fifty thousand human lives were lost on this memorable day.

We may add that in the same seas the French frigate *Belle-Poule*, on her way from Bourbon to St. Marie, in Madagascar, was overtaken by a cyclone in the night of the 15th to the 16th of December 1846, and reduced to a complete wreck, while her consort, *Le Berceau*, foundered.

CYCLONIC PHENOMENA.

It has been forcibly said that if the winds are unchained in the tempests, they are like furious madmen in the hurricanes. Their terrible power then upraises those tremendous tidal waves which break upon the shores with an indescribable impetuosity. In the great hurricane of 1772, which literally devastated the West Indies, it was ascertained that at Santa Cruz the sea rose nearly eighty feet above its usual level, with a roar that was plainly audible one hundred miles out at sea : it carried off and engulfed in its remorseless bosom upwards of two hundred persons who were hastening towards the mountains for safety.

In December 1789 the town of Coringa was entirely destroyed by three great waves which successively swept over it during a cyclone.

These fearful inundations are sometimes partly due to earthquakes, which have frequently been felt at the approach or during the period of a cyclone.

The immense electrical action developed in the circle of these hurricanes is frequently revealed by incessant "lightnings and thunders," accompanied by torrents of rain. During the Santa Cruz hurricane of which we have just spoken, a tenfold darkness prevailed, illuminated only by the meteors which touched the crests of the hills like globes of fire. In his account of the loss of the *Phœnix* frigate, quoted by Piddington,* Lieutenant Archer says :—

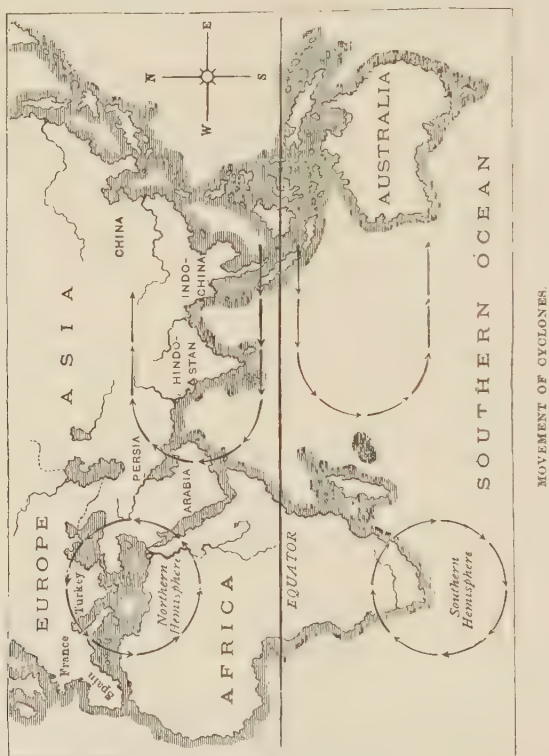
"Who can attempt to describe the appearance of the scene? If I should essay it, I should never be able to give you any accurate idea. A total darkness reigned all around us : the sea on fire, rising, so to speak, in Alps or Peaks of Teneriffe ('mountains' are too common an image) ; the wind pealing louder than the thunder (this is no freak of the imagination) ; the whole rendered still more terrific, if possible, by a kind of blue light of an extraordinary description."

An old writer describes, in the following words, the signs of a coming cyclone in East Indian seas :—"Sometimes, in the quarter of the horizon from which the tempest breaks, we see at first an incandescent cloud of the most singular character ; and some of these clouds have been so fearful as to make the spectator imagine that air and sea were on fire."

Let us note that in the transit of the centre of the most violent hurricanes the air produces a continual roaring, "like to that of wild beasts," or to innumerable voices raised in an

* Mr. Piddington, after twenty years of persevering research and careful study, gave the results to the world in a very valuable work entitled "The Law of Storms." It is full of interesting details relative to cyclonic phenomena.

excess of terror. Often in the very centre an obscure circle of imperfect light is visible at the zenith. Sometimes the sky grows completely clear, and the stars or the sun rise above the dense mass of clouds which darken the horizon.



The clouds part asunder, says a writer, and the sun, over the whole surface of the ocean, lightens up the foam with a whiteness like that of snow, and tinted like the rainbow in all directions.

The winter season would be the ruin of the harvests of the Torrid Zone, if the burning climates of those regions were not attempered by frequent rains. These rains are due to the passage of the cyclones, which furnish them with great quantities of the ammoniacal salts, the carbonic acid, and electricity so necessary,—vivifying rains, the salutary action of which frequently repairs the disasters caused by the tumult of the hurricanes. If this advantageous result be remembered, we shall see that cyclones, like everything else in nature, have their useful side; that, in truth, their utility more than counterbalances the injurious effects they sometimes produce. And it may very well be that in some “golden year” yet to come, while profiting by these scourges of the ocean, we may succeed, with the help of science, in averting, or at least in diminishing, the calamities which they inflict upon populous and prosperous lands.

XLVIII.

WRECK OF THE "PARANGON."

September 14, 1869.



ON the 14th of September 1869, after a day of almost suffocating heat, the wind rose suddenly in the night, and soon swelled into a frightful hurricane. The three-master *Parangon*, bound for North Shields with a full cargo, which she had taken on board at Almeria, was on her way up the Channel when the gale overtook her. Her captain, catching sight of the light-house of Etaples, mistook its lantern-rays for English lights, and steered so as to leave them on his left. William Duncan, one of the crew, who was well acquainted with both coasts, went up to him and warned him that he was steering a wrong course. But before his warning could be acted upon, the ship, driven by monstrous billows, took the ground so violently that her crew thought she must have struck against a reef.

It was one o'clock A.M. A great seam opened immediately in the hull of the *Parangon*, and its timbers began to crack and break up. The crew, however, had time to leap into a boat; but had scarcely got into it before several successive waves swept over it, capsized it, and tossed it, bottom upwards, like a straw. Duncan, a good swimmer, struck out

lustily, while freeing himself from his clothes with a knife which he had had the foresight to thrust into his waist-band when he saw that the ship's loss was inevitable. He soon felt one of his companions in misfortune clinging to him, and the poor fellow implored him to save him. "My friend," said Duncan, "if you hold on to me a few seconds more, we shall both perish ; and since I alone can swim, give me a chance to save myself." "You are right," said his comrade ; "farewell !" And the sea swallowed up that living waif.

After two hours of mortal anguish and desperate struggle, the unfortunate castaway succeeded in reaching the shore. It was nearly three o'clock in the morning. The night was dark, the shore desolate, and the storm swept the beach with cataracts of sand. Duncan dragged himself with difficulty to the hospital then recently built at Berck by a Paris charitable association as a Home for Sick Children. In vain he knocked and beat at its gates ; in vain he cried for help ;—the storm overpowered his voice. He then staggered towards the lighthouse, of which he could perceive the guiding lamp. On the way he struck his naked feet against a beam covered with nails, and wounded them severely ; nevertheless, he persevered, crawling along with the help of his hands.

The lighthouse is situated on an eminence, surrounded by high sharp-bladed and prickly grass and herbage. It is not easy to comprehend how, in so much torture, and in his enfeebled condition, Duncan succeeded in reaching the place, which even in daylight is very difficult of access.

He fell exhausted at the door of the lighthouse, calling for help. The door was immediately opened. M. Ledoux, the keeper, carried him into his chamber, took off his own clothes to cover him, rubbed his limbs before a large fire, administered some hot wine, and brought back by degrees a little



WRECK OF THE "PARAGON."

vital warmth and strength. Duncan had scarcely recovered his senses, when he exclaimed, as if awakening from a dream, "But my comrades ! We must go and seek them !"

Accordingly they took a supply of coverlets, and set out to explore the shore. By the wavering gleam of the lantern which they carried, they discovered a man whose head and half of his body were embedded in the sand, and who showed no signs of life. Duncan recognized him as John Stephenson, the carpenter of the *Paragon*. They rubbed him assiduously, and wrapped him in warm coverings. The day began to break ; the hospital opened its gates this time to the voice of suffering ; a physician was soon in attendance, and through a timely and energetic application of the proper remedies, Stephenson was rescued literally from the jaws of death.

When day had fully risen, a striking spectacle was presented to the eye. Over an area of a mile and a half, the beach was strewn with wreckage. The poop of the *Parangon* lay above high-water mark intact, as if it had been sawn across and deposited there. The hull could be seen deeply embedded in the sand, and when she was lightened of the pigs of lead that composed the cargo, the rising tide drove her ashore. Such had been the force of the waves, that enormous pieces of iron and copper, fully two inches thick, and used to bind together the different parts of the ship, had been broken like glass. So, too, the very pigs of lead had been twisted, bent, and, as it were, cast into the most fantastic moulds. The hurricane lasted for two days and a night; men did not remember to have experienced so fearful a storm for upwards of thirty years.

The crew of the *Parangon* had numbered eleven souls. Duncan and Stephenson alone escaped. They remained at Berck for ten days, carefully tended at the hospital, and from the population and visitors to the coast receiving evidence of the warmest compassion. A French writer adds, that Duncan especially attracted attention by his expressive countenance, and by the courage and energy of which he had furnished so remarkable a proof.

XLIX.

LOSS OF THE "CAPTAIN."

September 7, 1870.



YOUR readers must still remember the consternation which prevailed in England when the tidings arrived of the foundering of the turret-ship *Captain*, and the loss of nearly all on board. The unexpectedness of the disaster, the woful sacrifice of valuable lives, and the peculiarity of the circumstances, all combined to surround the event with a great and painful interest. Disasters at sea, unfortunately, are of too common occurrence to arouse in a busy maritime nation more than a passing sensation of regret; and in these times, history moves forward with such rapid strides, and incidents crowd so rapidly upon one another, that the wonder of to-day is effaced by the wonder of to-morrow. But there was much about the loss of the *Captain* which gave it more than an ephemeral importance, and the national mind was long in recovering from the shock it occasioned.

The *Captain* was a new ship, and one of the glories of modern naval architecture. She had but recently been added to the Royal Navy, from the designs of Captain Cowper Coles, the inventor of the "turret" principle, by which the heaviest ordnance was to be easily manipulated on a vessel's

deck under the protection of a shot-proof revolving tower, and to be directed at any point the gunners might desire to attack. She was built as a rival to another turret-ship—the *Monarch*—which had been constructed under the superintendence of the British Admiralty, but was not, in the opinion of Captain Coles, a fair representative of his system. The two vessels had sailed on an experimental cruise, and the *Captain* had shown so decided a superiority, had proved herself so easily managed, and so thoroughly seaworthy—at least, so it was thought—that critics were induced to forgive her uncomeliness of appearance, and to welcome her as a formidable addition to the fighting power of the British Navy. In fact, she was pronounced the “war-ship of the future.”

The *Captain* was a low-bowed vessel of four thousand two hundred and seventy-two tons, with her hull not more than four feet out of water; the object of her inventor being to present to an enemy's fire as small an extent of surface and as difficult a target as possible. It is obvious that a vessel floating so near the surface of the water was exposed to considerable danger in heavy seas; but this danger was supposed to be met by the peculiar construction of her deck, and the numerous devices to provide her with an unusual power of flotation. She carried two circular turrets on deck, for the reception of her guns, which were of the heaviest calibre manufactured. These turrets were shot-proof, and by means of machinery could be kept in continual revolution; so that the gunners could keep up a circular fire, while their own iron-clad forts sheltered them from the fire of an antagonist. She carried four masts; and was fitted with engines of a nominal steam-power of nine hundred horses. Under steam, as we have said, and in tolerably smooth water, she had proved herself exceedingly manageable; but, notwithstanding her apparent success, some naval authorities

were still heard to assert that under sail she could not be trusted.

Such, however, was not the opinion of her inventor ; nor was it that of her commander, Captain Hugh Burgoyne, one of the ablest and bravest officers in the British Navy, and the only son of the veteran general and Peninsular hero, Sir John Burgoyne, then Constable of the Tower. It was, therefore, with high hopes that they sailed to join the Mediterranean fleet, under Admiral Sir Alexander Milne, which, on the 6th of September 1870, was cruising off the Spanish coast, for the purpose of testing the qualities of the "ironclads," of which it was chiefly composed. The admiral's ship, the *Lord Warden*, the *Minotaur*, the *Agincourt*, and the *Captain* were sailing in company ; the *Captain* closing up the line, somewhat astern of the *Lord Warden*. At sunset the western horizon was heavy with clouds, but no signs were visible of a coming gale. Towards midnight the wind grew fresher, and the rain began to fall in pitiless floods. Gradually the weather grew more and more unfavourable, and at midnight a regular Bay of Biscay gale came up.

In the afternoon Admiral Milne and his staff had paid a visit to the *Captain*, to witness from her decks a trial of sailing, in which she was to be matched against the *Monarch*, the *Inconstant*, and the *Bristol*. They remained on board until the evening, but declined Captain Burgoyne's invitation to dine with him, and return to their own ship the next morning. It was about seven o'clock when they left, and the sea was then running so heavily, that torrents of water swept the *Captain's* deck, and the admiral's galley was nearly swamped while lying alongside. That some of Sir Alexander Milne's party did not feel the confidence which was felt by Captain Burgoyne, may be inferred from the fact that, on reaching their own ship, they were heard to thank God they

were safe on board again. Shortly afterwards, the *Captain* exchanged signals with the rest of the fleet ; and this was her last greeting.

As the south-westerly gale increased in force, the admiral ordered the reefs to be taken in, and until about half-past one all his ships rode securely in the troubled sea. The *Captain* was then steering for the north-west, and carrying treble-reefed fore and maintop sails, and foretop-mast staysail. Fourteen minutes afterwards, the fleet reeled under the attack of a sudden and tremendous squall. The admiral immediately signalled for every ship to tack. For two hours the "white squall" prevailed, buffeting the huge ironclads as if they were playthings, and rending their great strong top-sails as if they were sheets of paper. The most experienced officers and the bravest seamen passed a night of sleepless anxiety, and breathed a prayer of thanksgiving when morning dawned, and the storm repented of its fury. Each ship looked eagerly around to see if her comrades were safe. The fleet was happily intact, except that the *Captain* had disappeared ! What was the reason ? Most persons concluded that she had not observed the admiral's signal to tack, but had kept on her course, and was some leagues away to the north-west. Others, who had always mistrusted her sea-going qualities, felt that their fears had received a terrible confirmation, and ventured to assert that she had gone down during the squall. And her loss was explained on one or other of the following suppositions : Either, when the wind shifted, she was taken aback, and struck by a succession of heavy seas, so that, unable to right herself, she filled, and immediately foundered ; or, while she lay aback, the billows burst in her large stern port, and down she went head foremost, suddenly and helplessly.

The admiral's report was necessarily vague, for neither he

nor his officers had seen the catastrophe ; and it ran as follows :—

“The *Captain* was astern of my ship, apparently closing under steam. The signal ‘Open order’ was made, and at once answered ; and at 1.15 A.M. she was on the *Lord Warden’s* lee-quarter, about six points abaft of the beam. From that time until about 1.30 A.M. I constantly watched the ship ; her top-sails were either close-reefed or on the lap, her fore-sail was close up, the main-sail having been furled at 5.30 P.M. ; but I could not see any fore and aft set. She was heeling over a good deal to starboard, with the wind on her port side. Her red bow-light was all this time clearly seen.

“Some minutes after, I again looked for her light ; but it was thick with rain, and the light was no longer visible. The squalls of wind and rain were very heavy, and the *Lord Warden* was kept, by the aid of the screw and after-trysails, with her bow to a heavy sea, and at times it was thought that the sea would have broken over her gangways. At 2.15 A.M. (the 7th) the gale somewhat subsided, and the wind went round to the north-west, but without any squall ; in fact, the weather moderated, the heavy bank of clouds had passed off to the eastward, and the stars came out clear and bright ; the moon, which had given considerable light, was setting ; no large ship was near us where the *Captain* had been observed, although the lights of some were visible at a distance.”

When the daylight shone over the still troubled sea, the melancholy fate of the *Captain* was placed beyond the range of doubt or hope. Pieces of wreck, known to have belonged to her, and the body of one of her crew, were picked up. It was evident that in the squall the great ship had gone down, and, as was supposed, that the five hundred men and officers on board of her had perished. It was not known until three days later that the master-gunner and seventeen seamen had

safely reached Corcubion on the evening succeeding the wreck.

An officer on board the *Inconstant* addressed a letter to his father in England, which furnishes a few details of the disaster. "All day yesterday," he wrote, "and again this morning, we have been employed in picking up the *Captain's* boats, fragments of spars, upper works, and, what is more ominous still, bits of polished mahogany that formed part of her fittings between decks. Nobody permits himself to hope. We were the last that saw her before the height of the gale. A terror and awe indescribable are over every one on board. The *Captain* was the famous exponent of Captain Cowper Coles' turret and low-freeboard theory, and the poor man was on board her himself to observe her performances.....We picked up to-day a portion of the bowsprit, with some poor fellow's black handkerchief tied to it. He had evidently attempted to make himself fast."

When the survivors arrived at Portsmouth, the particulars of the tragic event were forthcoming, and the country was brought acquainted with the circumstances under which the *Captain* had met her fate. It appears that, at the time of the catastrophe, Captain Burgoyne, whose vigilance was unremitting, was on deck, wearing his pilot-cloth reefer and uniform cap. The ship was under steam and sail, with her double-reef fore and main staysails set. When the middle watch was called at midnight, the weather threatened so heavily that the captain thought fit to remain on deck.

As soon as the new watch had gained their posts, he issued some instructions as to the canvas set; but before they could be followed out, a tremendous sea struck the vessel on the weather beam, and flooded her low decks. Immediately Captain Burgoyne and the men found themselves waist-deep in

water, the ship being on her beam-ends, and quivering from stem to stern in her violent efforts to right herself. In these she failed, and turning right over, she was speedily floating with her keel uppermost; all who were below being suffocated, we suppose, by the inrush of the billows.

The watch were struggling with the waves, and in about ten minutes, catching sight of the ship's steam pinnace life-boat at a short distance off, keel uppermost, they swam towards her. With some difficulty she was reached by the captain, Mr. May, the gunner, and an able seaman, named Heard; and all got on board of her. When they had time to look around, not a sign of the *Captain* was visible; but through the mist loomed the huge form of one of the vessels of the squadron. Then they raised their voices, and shouted, "Ship ahoy!" until they could shout no longer; but the noise of the wind and waters drowned their ineffectual clamours.

The pinnace was sorely beset by the raging waves, and the men were frequently washed from its keel, regaining their hazardous positions, however, by the assistance of their comrades. After a while the ship's second launch, with ten men in her, came near them, and discerning their peril, contrived to get alongside, and to take most of the little company on board. A sudden lurch, however, parted the two boats before Captain Burgoyne and Heard could reach the launch. Heard nobly and heroically clung close to his commander, whom he describes, at this awful moment, as retaining all his presence of mind, and exhibiting the utmost serenity and firmness.

"Come, sir," said Heard, taking him by the hand, "let us jump."

Captain Burgoyne answered, "Save your own life, my man."

As the distance between the pinnace and the launch con-

tinued to increase, Heard exclaimed, “Will you come or not, sir?” and when the captain replied, “Jump and save yourself; I shall not forget you some day,” he ventured on the dangerous leap, and happily succeeded in reaching the launch.

Captain Burgoyne was never seen again, and the British navy lost in him one of her ablest officers, who had shown himself as intrepid as he was skilful, and who loved the service with all the passionate enthusiasm of the great seamen of the old days. Amongst the lost were also the second son of Mr. Childers, then First Lord of the Admiralty, and a son of Lord Northbrook, recently Viceroy of India.

One of the survivors has recorded as follows his recollections of the last moments of the unfortunate *Captain*:—

“At a quarter past twelve, midnight of the 6th, morning of the 7th, the ship *Captain* was on the port tack, close hauled, with the wind about N.W., very squally, with rain and heavy sea.

“About midnight, the ship made a heavy roll to starboard, and before she had time to recover, a heavy sea struck her, and threw her on her beam-ends.

“She then turned bottom upwards, and went down stem first. From the time of turning over to the time of sinking was about *ten minutes*. Going over, the water ran down the funnel, but did not drown the shrieks of the stokers.

“The report when she sank resembled a tremendous explosion. Not a soul could get up from below, as the whole happened in an instant. All the men saved, but one, belonged to the watch on deck.

“David Dryburg walked along the ship’s side as she turned over, and finally along her bottom. She was not knocking about much. All had confidence when she recovered from the first heavy lurch; but she failed to recover from the second, heeling gradually over till she capsized.”

The time during which the *Captain* floated on the surface is here stated at ten minutes, but some of the survivors computed it at five, and some at only three minutes. It would seem clear, therefore, that she did not fill with water, or go down in the ordinary way of a ship which founders, fills, and sinks from excessive weight. She turned over, and then floated upside down for from three to ten minutes. Consequently, she must have continued full of air; the crew would have been able to move about and breathe; and for a time they lived, as it were, in a huge diving-bell. The roar heard as she went down was probably the escape of steam, as the weights slipped from the safety-valves in the act of the vessel's heeling, and the contents of the boiler, consequently, would be discharged into the engine-room. Mr. Scott Russell thinks that the engine compartment would remain full of steam for some minutes; the rest of the ship, separated by water-tight compartments, remaining full of air; but at last the steam and fuel would have parted with their heat, the whole engine-room would become a huge condenser, and a terrific rush of water into the engine-room would fill it up and take the ship down; otherwise the ship might have floated with its living freight for a long time. But who will not thank God that the agony of death was mercifully cut short for those whom no human help could have saved?

The following statistics show the dimensions and fighting power of the noble vessel thus strangely lost:—

Length between perpendiculars, 320 feet.

Breadth (extreme), 53 feet 3 inches.

Tonnage, 4272.

Mean draught of water, with all stores on board, 25 feet 3 inches.

Height of upper deck at side from water, 6 feet 6 inches.

Displacement of water, in tons, equal to 7800.

Armament of protected guns (in the turrets, two in each), 4 guns, each weighing 25 tons.

We have referred to the launch as coming to the aid of

the few men who clung to the keel of the upturned pinnace. At the moment the vessel went down, three seamen, one of whom was named Hirst, sprang overboard ; but not in time to swim out of the range of the whirlpool caused by her descent. They were sucked under at first ; but Hirst came up again, and knocking himself against a floating spar, he bound himself to it with his black silk neckerchief. But he was soon washed away, and must have perished, had he not discovered the launch floating close at hand, and contrived to get hold of her stern. He found that several men had stationed themselves on the top of the canvas covering ; and they proceeded to right the boat as best they could. Immediately afterwards they fell in with the pinnace, as already described, and rescued four of their companions. Being then eighteen in all, including Mr. May, the gunner, they made an effort to put the launch about, and bring her head up to the sea. In the attempt, she filled with a wave, and two men were washed out of her.

They then set to work to bail the water out with their caps, and made a second effort to put the boat's head to the sea. It was unsuccessful. They had only nine oars : one was used for steering, the other eight were shipped in the row-locks for pulling ; but they were of little avail with so heavy a boat, and so she was suffered to run for shore before the wind and the sea, and she arrived in safety at Corcubion.

Mr. May, the gunner, was tried by court-martial, according to custom, but, of course, was acquitted, and commended for his cool and intrepid conduct. The court at the same time decided that the catastrophe was caused by the pressure of sail upon the *Captain*, though it would not have imperilled a ship constructed on sounder principles. There can be no doubt that her freeboard was too low, and that she did not possess an adequate amount of stability.

I.

IN A CYCLONE: THE "AMAZON."

October 1870.



IN her liturgy, the Church of England regularly offers up a prayer for those in peril of life at sea. And well may it be so, when we think of the variety and constant character of that peril! Peril from the lee-shore—peril from the sunken rock—peril from the hidden shoal—peril from the devouring breakers—peril from the lightning-flash—peril from the unheeded spark of fire—peril from the hurricane! Horace might fitly say that he who first committed his frail bark to the ferocious waters needed a breast thrice-armed, like the warrior of old, in brazen mail. And though, since the time of Horace, human skill and science have done much to enable human intrepidity to escape the dangers of the sea, they are still ever present to the mariner, and call for the highest courage to brave, and the greatest vigilance to guard against, them.

No peril is greater than that which arises in connection with those revolving storms, known as cyclones, of which we have already given some description. Of these it is the peculiarity that, as their name indicates, they rotate on their axis within a certain definite area. Their fury seems gathered up at their focus or centre—"the eye of the storm," as sailors call it—and

thence it whirls round and round with a swiftness not less awful than their violence. It is another peculiarity that their boundaries are so marked that a ship may actually sail outside them and trace their area, just as it might sail along and explore a line of coast. And *outside* it is in perfect safety, but once caught *within* the tempest, the finest seamanship and the greatest resolution may be unable to save it.

Sometimes the range of the cyclone extends over the land, in which its effects are truly disastrous. Thus, in August 1870, the island of St. Thomas, in the Atlantic, was visited by one of these atmospheric scourges. The harbour is well sheltered, and escaped all serious injury; it was otherwise with the town itself. *There* the spectacle was as sad as it was strange. The streets were strewn with all kinds of wreckage: tiles, bricks, shattered furniture, wood-work, and the carcasses of animals, were piled up pell-mell; huge trees, uprooted by the resistless gale, and carried down by the floods, lay in rows; the church and hospital, though well built of stone, were in ruins; houses were rent to their foundations, or removed a yard or more from their former site. Thirty persons perished, and their dead bodies were found among the ruins; the loss of property was immense. Yet such is the capricious nature of these storms, that the western quarter of the town suffered scarcely at all. Otherwise, the town and the whole island were literally devastated. All vegetation was stricken dead, the trees were stripped of their foliage, most of them of their branches. An entire village was swept away bodily by the furious whirlwind, and the soil on which it had been built seemed to have been newly ploughed.

We proceed to record in these pages an example of the effects of these cyclonic storms at sea.

On the 10th of October 1870, the French transport-ship

the *Amazon* was caught in a cyclone under the following circumstances :—

On the previous day, the ship being in lat. $26^{\circ} 15' N.$, and long. $68^{\circ} 10' W.$, at a distance of about 120 leagues from Shakespeare's "still-vest Bermoothes," her officers observed every indication of an approaching tempest. The weather grew worse and worse, and the barometer sank very rapidly. Wild dark clouds scurried across the face of heaven, and a low hissing sound was heard creeping over the sea. Before long it was obvious that the ship was steering right into the centre of a cyclone, and in spite of his reluctance to let a vessel reported somewhat crazy drive before so heavy a sea, her captain was compelled to alter her course to the south-west. Half an hour later, and though the fore-sail was taken up in a couple of reefs, it was torn in rags, and blown right away. For an hour or more the *Amazon* scudded under bare poles in a south-westerly direction; but the violence of the sea and the wind increasing, she was first driven to the south-south-east, and afterwards south-east. There was no longer time for hesitation; the back-stays of the mizzen-topmast were cut away, in the hope that the fall of the mizzen-mast would bring the ship to. The mast came down with a crash, but still the *Amazon* did not answer her helm. Meantime, the barometer was still falling.

Gale and sea were frightful; the rain descended in torrents; the ship trembled and shivered from stem to stern. The water having forced its way into the hold, surged up against bulkheads and partitions; nearly all the crew and all the passengers were at the pumps; and yet the cyclone was far from having reached its climax.

At half-past seven the barometer was still sinking with great rapidity, and the *Amazon* now entered into the very heart of the atmospheric perturbation. The main-mast was

THE "AMAZON" IN A CYCLONE.



broken in two; next went the foretop-mast and the jib-boom; the nettings were torn into ribbons; the boats having got loose, rolled to and fro with a deafening clatter, with such shocks and crashes as to lead to a belief that everything was at an end; and the crash and clang of the fittings of the cabins and other articles, as they splintered and cracked and drove against one another, almost prevailed above the noises of the storm. The crested waves tore across the sea like white-maned horses. A billow more violent than the rest carried away the rudder. In the engine-room the water twice rose to a level with the fires, and once the flame, being forced downwards by the fury of the wind, invaded the furnace-room; three times the engineers were compelled to retreat from their posts.

The scene was at its height, so to speak, from half-past seven to twenty-five minutes past eight, after which the barometer showed a rising tendency. In this period of fifty-five minutes, the battered *Amazon* had but ten minutes of repose. This occurred while the centre of the meteor, or "eye of the storm," passed over her, revealing at the zenith a bright, cloudless, star-studded sky, in a circumference distinctly traced by the edge of the clouds. It was estimated by the officers of the *Amazon* that this circumference was not extensive, and that they had "cut" the centre of the cyclone on a line, or chord, of no great length, so as "to find themselves on the side of a demi-circle." That is, they had fortunately taken the cyclone at the narrowest part of its area. By midnight the gale had perceptibly moderated; the barometer, which, at first, had risen by leaps, had reached 29.134 inches, and continued to rise very steadily and surely.

Only one life was lost in this awful storm; that of a native of Anam, who was returning thither. Having taken refuge in the long-boat, he was crushed to death. It is truly wonder-

ful that this was all, considering the fury and duration of the cyclone. It was not less wonderful, and even more fortunate, that the engines, funnel, and boilers sustained no serious injuries.

In his report to the French Admiralty, the captain of the *Amazon* speaks highly, though, apparently, not more highly than was deserved, of the admirable conduct of all on board; of the energy and devotion of the officers and seamen on that "too memorable night" of the 10th of October; as also of the firmness and courageous bearing of the passengers, even when they thought that all hope was at an end, and that they were doomed to a sudden and terrible death.

Rudderless and mastless—a mere hulk—with no other resource than her engines afforded, the *Amazon* continued her voyage; but as the wind was still violent and the sea still ran high, she was six days in reaching Porto Rico. There she was taken in tow by boats belonging to the French station of the Antilles, and the most necessary repairs having been effected, she was convoyed to Martinique.

LI.

LOSS OF THE "MEGÆRA."

June 1871.



HER Majesty's ship *Megæra* was employed by the Admiralty, in the early part of the year 1871, to convey a detachment of troops to Australia. Some doubts being entertained as to her seaworthiness, she was examined at Queenstown by the admiral commanding at that station, and by other officials; who, after directing some alterations to be made in the disposition of her stores and baggage, and lightening her of a portion of her cargo, reported her fit to proceed on her intended voyage. She reached the Cape of Good Hope in safety, and after remaining there for a few days, sailed from Simon's Bay for Sydney, early in the morning of Sunday the 28th of May. At this time she had on board 333 souls; namely, 42 officers, 44 marines, 180 seamen, and 67 boys.

With a favourable wind, and, on the whole, fair weather, the *Megæra* made such rapid progress that it was confidently affirmed she would reach her haven of destination by the 8th of July. On the 7th of June she steamed one hundred and ninety-five miles; on the 8th, two hundred and fourteen. During the night of the 8th, however, the wind blew strongly,

and the sea ran heavily. The labouring ship sprung a leak, and not a trivial one which could easily be repaired, but "a terrible inroad of the sea by some channel as yet unknown, which was raising the level of the water in the ship's hold at the rate of an inch in every hour!" In the morning watch it was ascertained that the water in the engine-room was seventeen inches deep; and as the ship was very broad at bottom, this depth indicated an immense quantity. The ship's pumps were immediately manned; the bilge-pumps set in motion; and by the activity of the crew the depth was reduced to thirteen inches.

The next effort was to ascertain the locality of the leak. This was not very easily done: for, in the first place, the water covered the ship's framework to some height; and, in the second, her bottom, inside the iron plating, was lined with brickwork and cement. Day after day passed by, and all the exertions of the engineers proved unsuccessful, and it was only by assiduous pumping that the ship could be kept afloat.

One of the officers of the *Megara* has put on record a graphic narrative of her misadventure, and he tells us that, from the 9th to the 13th of June, her crew and passengers were in a state of apprehension and uncertainty. The leak had not been found, though it was still sought for; and the men devoted all their energies to keeping the water under. After a while the leak defied them, and then more pumps were manned, and a party was ordered to bail out with iron buckets, which were hoisted up, sixty in an hour, to the sound of fife and fiddle. In spite of every effort, the water rose higher and higher. "We could hear it splashing from side to side as the ship rolled. It sounded like a continual threatening, and made our hearts sicken."

"On the 13th," continues our authority, "we redoubled

our efforts to get a part of the hold dry, and put on a hundred men to bail from daylight. We resorted, too, to a new device; that is, we plugged up some of the communications by which the water spread itself from one to another compartment in the depths of the vessel. We thus cut off the stoke-hold from the next forward compartment, and the engine-room from its neighbour, and by this means considerably narrowed the space over which our search had to extend; for there was soon strong reason to believe that the rupture must be somewhere within a certain twelve-feet length measured along the bottom. One of the engineers wrought all day in the water seeking it. He crawled about under the engines and boilers. When the side of the ship on which he happened to be was the lower one, the water was quite over his head; and after keeping below it as long as nature could endure, he would come up to breathe, like a great sea-fish.

“At one o'clock in the morning of the 14th, after five days of dire suspense and of severe exertion—during which, however, we had been running rapidly on our course—we ascertained thus much: that there was no dealing with the evil, or even approaching it, except by cutting a hole large enough to admit the hands through an iron frame. To do this exercised our patience for twenty-four hours more, at the end of which time we could put our hands upon the orifice. When we first saw the place from a distance, the jet of water looked so steady and round that we flattered ourselves with the fancy that a rivet had dropped out which might easily be replaced. But it was no lost rivet. It was a hole fairly worn through one of the iron plates; and the whole plate had been worn so thin, that throughout its surface it yielded and bent under the pressure of the hand like a sheet of tin. Thus our fears were realized as to other and greater dangers threatening than the immediate danger with which we were grappling.”

The leak having been discovered, Captain Thrupp proceeded to remedy it; or, at all events, to provide against its worst



SIZE AND SHAPE OF THE LEAK.

consequences. A plate of iron covered with gutta-percha was brought over the old and worn-out plate by means of a long clamp, which was screwed into a sound part of the iron-work. The new plate, however, could not be screwed or riveted to the old, as the latter was unable to

bear any such operation; and consequently the water still entered the ship, not, indeed, in a spout or jet, but oozing through the interstices of the plates.

The course of the *Megæra* since the leak was discovered lay towards St. Paul's Island, the nearest land in the Indian Ocean. On the 9th, they were about one thousand five hundred miles distant from it; on the 15th, only two hundred and ninety-two miles; and on the 16th, only eighty-six. When morning broke on the 17th, and the mist cleared off, it lay before them at no greater distance than nine miles! How quickly these were run over it is needless to state. In less than an hour the *Megæra* was at anchor in smooth water, and had escaped the peril, which at one time seemed imminent, of foundering in the Indian Ocean.

A diver was immediately sent down to ascertain the exact condition of the bottom of the ship. His report was very unsatisfactory, for he said that the plates adjacent to the broken one were so thin that he could easily have put his knife through them. An examination inside showed that

some of the timber-frames were eaten away; the pumps were also choked at frequent intervals with pieces of iron from an inch to an inch and a half in length; and altogether the *Megæra* was found to be in so precarious a condition, that Captain Thrupp determined he would not be justified in continuing the voyage. He therefore resolved to land the crew, passengers, and stores, and to establish a camp on the island until assistance should arrive. This decision was announced to the crew on Sunday the 18th.

The island of St. Paul is a mere speck upon the Indian Ocean, its latitude being about $38^{\circ} 43'$ S., and its longitude about $77^{\circ} 38'$ E. It is two miles long, and a mile and a half broad. In shape, it may be described as the rim of a large basin, which is supposed to be the crater of a dormant or extinct volcano; the depth of the crater being about twenty-five or thirty fathoms, whilst its sides rise above the sea to a height of eight hundred and sixty feet,—that is, at certain places. The bar has usually twelve feet of water upon it at spring-tides: a piece of information which the crew derived from two Frenchmen whom they found upon the island, and who were able to give them many valuable and important hints about the place to which they had so providentially been led.

Having once determined to remain at St. Paul's, Captain Thrupp was not long in landing, and in selecting sites for the people and the stores his ship contained. On board, the discharge of provisions from the vessel was carried on with such unremitting vigour, that by dark the four months' stock was safely housed on shore. Every one assisted in the work, without distinction between officers and seamen; cooks and stewards, too, were to be seen bending their backs to hard burdens; and doctors and paymasters tugging valiantly at the ropes, much to the detriment of soft white hands, but much

to the invigoration of both mind and body. Before dusk came on, the ship had been got in nearer to a place where whalers are accustomed to lie for two or three weeks at a time; and all that night the men were busily engaged in filling coal-bags in readiness to land. Their leading object was so to lighten the vessel that she might float easily over the bar, when, as the Frenchmen were good enough to predict, the twelve feet of water were upon it. But their efforts were useless. The wind blew so hard throughout that dreary Sunday night, that in the morning the ship was discovered to be drifting rapidly upon the rocks; and it was all that they could do by force of steam to keep it from arriving at a speedy destruction. Boats full of coal were continually being sent on shore. The gale, however, increased to such a height that the *Megæra* was once nearly on the rocks, and was saved only by the engines sending it out full speed astern. Then she was blown out to sea so violently, that, with all the power of steam, she could not keep near land; and those on shore were pained by the temporary apprehension that their comrades had left them in the lurch.

By-and-by the ship was enabled to make way in-shore; but the wind was now so high and furious that it was clearly impossible she could be kept afloat another night. Either she must strike on the rocks, or she must founder; for, alas! the leak was open again, and as bad as ever it had been.

Once more the captain had to arrive at a rapid decision; and he promptly and rightly concluded that the only safe plan was to run the ship aground. "No sooner said than done." The holds and lower decks were cleared of everything that they contained, in preparation for the water that would soon be in. One of the Frenchmen acted as the pilot, the captain's coxswain took the helm, and the captain himself gave the orders. Thus, steaming at full speed ahead, the *Megæra*

drove right headlong towards the bar, on which she stranded in a perpendicular position. "The engines were stopped just as she took the ground, but they worked again full speed to keep her up, until the water rose inside her, and put the fires out. When they were powerless, we let go our last anchor to prevent her slipping off the bank; and there she stuck, never to plough the seas again. The *Megæra* was a wreck."

It was an anxious moment for all those on board. As the ship's bottom grated against the ground of the bar, it sprung a tremendous leak; a shore which was put over to keep her upright was snapped immediately, as she rolled backwards and forwards amidst the waves; and soon there were twelve feet of water in her forward, fifteen feet amidships, and seventeen feet in the after-hold; indeed, she was full to the poop-decks. The question was, whether she would part amidships, according to the suggestion of a few; or whether the waves would break over her funnels and her mast-heads, as soon as she should be fast. But neither of these contingencies occurred. After the fires were extinguished, the vessel lay quite calmly and quietly; and, says one of the survivors, with a truly English touch of description, "We left off making or listening to gloomy speculations, and *went to dinner*."

The wreck was not wholly deserted until the 29th of June. Up to that time, the crew employed themselves in the three offices of unloading the ship as far as possible, of erecting habitations on the island, and of looking out in every direction for a supply of water. A portion of the ship was still quite habitable; and thus, day by day, all hands were set to work to get the stores on shore,—four shore-boats, manned by officers, being employed upon that duty. It has been remarked that the men had to be trusted with open boxes, containing many things which might have sorely tempted them, yet not a single article was missed. The sails were all

saved, and most of the stores and bales. The coal was inundated with water, and could only be got at by the men immersing themselves in the dark, dirty fluid. The condensing apparatus was also under water, and could not be extricated; but three main-deck tanks were taken on shore, and one of them was staved up and strengthened until it was fitted to act as a boiler, which effectually supplied the place of the more scientific machinery. The ammunition, again, was in a similar predicament with the coal, and all that could be saved of it were forty-seven rounds of powder, and two thousand rounds of ball-cartridge. The diver, however, was able to work at the stores under water with some degree of success. Happily the cat-o'-nine-tails had been brought on shore, for the benefits of its use required and obtained illustration in the midst of the unloading operations. An ordinary seaman took it into his head to refuse to work; whereupon the captain, we are told, "had the offender seized up to a grating on board, and ordered him four dozen lashes, which brought the culprit to his senses, and deterred any other skulkers, if such there were, from objecting to take their share of the toil."

Meanwhile, a large party of the crew were preparing house accommodation on the island itself,—and this they did by utilizing some old sheds and huts that already existed; by running up tents; and more frequently by erecting huts of masonry or turf, of which canvas generally formed the roof, and which were all laid out in order according to a previously agreed to plan. The marines had a tent to themselves; the sailors had four. There was one for the hospital, one for the petty officers, and one for the stokers. And the stewards, the servants, and the men's bags, each occupied a separate tent. A cooking-galley was, of course, a necessity. The captain's residence—or "Government House," as it was called—was so far from being imposingly magnificent, that it was merely

an old shed in which whale-oil had been wont to be boiled. Besides this, there was a signal station erected on a conspicuous point; above this was a small outpost for the look-out men; and "perpendicular to the northern horn" of "the Esplanade," they ran out a landing pier into the crater.

By the 24th of June, all had landed from the ship except the captain, twelve other officers, and forty men. And these were soon transferred to the settlement on shore. The end of the *Megæra* had arrived. On the night between the 9th and 10th of August, her starboard quarter gallery was washed away by heavy rollers; but she still held herself upright on the bar with her masts all standing. And even on the 23rd of August, when the mizzen-mast was sawn off flush with the poop, and came down with such a crash that it broke in half, the ship still kept her ground, as if unwilling to surrender her existence. However, on the morning of the 3rd of September, a loud report was heard in the direction of the ill-fated vessel, and when the surf and rollers cleared away it appeared that the old *Megæra* had parted amidships. "Soon after, the main-mast fell, and the part of the ship containing the engines and boilers broke up. Above the howling of the wind and the roaring of the surf could be heard the rending and cracking of her parting timbers and plates. The fore-mast with the fore-yard fell next. The bows then tumbled over. The stern of the ship was afterwards driven ashore on the rocks." Thus perished, not an easy victim even to the fury of Nature, Her Majesty's iron screw-ship *Megæra*, seventy-six days after she had been stranded on the shore of St. Paul's.

The colony on the island was a model of order. Instead of watches, they had guards. Sanitary inspectors were appointed, and an executive staff was formed to carry out their various decrees. Exploring bands were told off, and a signal station was established on the heights, eight hundred and sixty feet

above the camp. There they hauled up the spar which, on the 18th of June, a party of officers had, in their first outburst of zeal, raised to a height of five hundred feet, and then left on the ledge of a precipice; and which, when it became a flag-staff, as it afterwards did become, displayed the British ensign upside down.

The great problem which had to be solved by the little community was, How to make their provisions last? These consisted of 13,000 pounds of biscuit, about six weeks' full allowance of flour, salt meat, preserved meats, tea, rum, chocolate, and a very little sugar. Now, as it was clear that they could not hope for relief until three months at least after they had sent news of their misfortune to Australia by some passing ship, it was equally clear that their food must be made to last them for even longer than that space of time. Accordingly, officers and men were put on one-third allowance of bread, two-thirds allowance of salt meat, one-half allowance of sugar, and one-fourth allowance of tea; these scanty rations, however, being supplemented by "fish dinners," and occasional banquets on wild goat's flesh.

With the residence of the *Megara's* people on the island we are not called, however, to concern ourselves. They suffered to some extent from disease, and for the first few weeks from scarcity of provisions; but on and after the 27th of August, when they were assured that relief would soon arrive, they were placed on full allowance. Lieutenant Lewis Jones, who had been despatched to Batavia for assistance, in a Dutch bark that chanced to call at the island on the 16th of July, returned on the 26th of August, in the *Oberon* screw-steamer, bringing supplies of provisions, and the welcome news that the steamer *Malacca* left Hong-Kong on the 7th of August, with orders to carry the castaways off St. Paul's to Sydney.

But before she could arrive, in came H.M.S. *Rinaldo* on

THE LAST OF THE "MEGAERA."



the 29th of August, with instructions for Captain Thrupp to proceed to England, and face the usual court-martial for the loss of his ship. (It is almost unnecessary to say that the verdict of the court was warmly in his favour.) Next morning—the 30th—the *Malacca* arrived; but owing to the weather, both ships were again compelled to stand out to sea, and it was not until the 1st of September that the work of embarkation began. It was completed by the 5th, when the *Malacca* started for King George's Sound, whence her crew proceeded to Sydney.

Thus were they all saved, "Thanks, in the first place," says the writer on whose simple record our brief narrative is founded, "to the Providence that watched over us, and brought us through so many dangers; but thanks also to the instrument, Captain Thrupp, who after so many misfortunes could give a good account of us all!"

LII.

WRECK OF THE "NORTHFLEET."

January 22, 1873.



T may justly be said of every shipwreck that it is attended by circumstances of peculiarly painful interest; and this, indeed, seems a truism or a commonplace that must be obvious to every mind. Yet some of these disasters are more affecting, and appeal more powerfully to our feelings, than is the case with others; not so much from the loss of life they may have involved—though this is necessarily a consideration of primary importance—as from the conditions under which they have taken place. And it is in this way that the loss of the *Captain*, which we have previously described, and the destruction of the *Northfleet*, which now claims our notice, created so profound a sensation. The tale of ordinary wrecks is one which every month, almost every week, repeats; and we gradually grow accustomed to the dreary record. We are awakened out of the indifference of habit only when the features of the calamity are startling and unusual.

The emigrant-ship *Northfleet*, bound for Australia, with three hundred and seventy-nine souls on board, under the command of Captain Knowles, sailed from the river Thames

on the 13th of January 1873, but meeting with strong adverse winds, was compelled to run for Margate Roads. The weather continuing contrary, she was unable to drop down further than Dungeness, where, on the afternoon of Tuesday, the 21st, she cast anchor in what seemed a position of certain safety.

She remained all snug during the whole of Wednesday, and at nightfall hoisted out her lights, and set her watch as usual; while the remainder of her crew and the passengers, shrinking from the cold January winds, went below, and pursued their usual occupations or amusements.

About half-past ten, the look-out men descried a large two-masted screw-steamer bearing directly down upon the *Northfleet*. They immediately hailed her, but receiving no reply, the pilot was summoned from the saloon, and every exertion made by shouting and blowing whistles to attract the attention of those on board. All was in vain. Steadily and surely the cruel ship kept on her disastrous way, and struck the emigrant-vessel right in the midships with a force so terrible that her prow entered one of the berths where a man was sleeping. Then, becoming aware of the evil she had wrought, she backed with all possible speed, and under cover of the darkness stole away, without pausing to render the slightest succour to the damaged ship.

What followed is best told in the simple language of one of the survivors, which, with some slight alterations, we shall now adopt, as painting the scene in graphic colours, and with all the force and freshness of the impressions of an actor in it:—

Most of the emigrants had gone to bed, and were dropping off to sleep; but I and three other fellows were playing cards at the second table from the midship hatchway. The doctor

had been round and ordered them to their berths, as he would not allow playing at so late an hour. Some of us were talking, laughing, and joking innocently, when suddenly I heard a voice on the deck cry out, "Ship ahoy!" I was wondering what it meant, when I heard a gurgling noise like water, and immediately afterwards a tremendous crash. I rushed upstairs at once. One of my mates got up, dropped his cards on the table, and turning pale as a sheet, ran to his bunk in fright, and endeavoured to hide himself. The other two followed me upon deck. Some of those who had been asleep sprung from their beds without their clothes, which they had stowed away under their pillow, and did not care to put on.

When we reached the deck it was dark, and yet not so dark that we could not see around us. There was one light at the mast-head, and two others, red and green, under the bow. Just as we got up there was another crash, and we heard the mate, who was a north-country man, shouting to somebody, though we could not at the moment see either him or them. As we ran towards him we saw a large vessel right against us, with her bow so near that I could have jumped on to her, and a lot of men running about on her deck, "jabbering" in a tongue that we could not understand. Then the mate turned to me and said, "I can't understand what they say. You run down below and tell that French fellow to come up; perhaps he can talk to them." For we had a "French fellow" among us.

As I was turning round to go down, I saw the foreigner bearing round with her stern to ours, and a lot of her crew running to the bow with a piece of tarpaulin, which they threw over the figure-head, so as to hide her name. With that she backed water, and got clear of us. The mate was shouting to them all the time, and when he saw this he cried out, "Ship ahoy! stop and save us, for we have over four

hundred emigrants on board;" but it was useless, for she continued to back water, and then shot ahead across our bow, and was away with her black smoke driving in our faces before we could say many words to each other, while they on board her cried out something foreign, which of course we could make nothing of.

At that moment there were but few on deck. I ran to the hatchway of the married people, and I put my head down and hallooed, "Come up, all of you; she's sinking!" And then the doctor, who was standing near, said to me, "Go down below and lie quiet, and don't make a row; there's nothing the matter." But I did not believe him, and as I was running for'ard again I saw the boatswain and a lot of the sailors going aft, crying out, "All hands at the pump!" But first I had a look over the side of the ship, and there I saw as plain as possible a tremendous hole stove in her side, and you could hear the water rushing in like a river. While I was doing this, the captain and all the crew had come on deck, and we set to work at the pump with a hearty good will, for even then we thought that we could save her. They tied ropes to the handles of the pump, which was a double-acting one, and we all set to together. We did not get out much, and the ship lay perfectly still, and we could almost feel her sinking.

At the same time the captain had got his blue lights out, and was firing them from the quarter-deck; and when he had done that, he ordered the men to fire the gun abaft. They loaded the gun, but it would not go off; and so they carried it up to the quarter-deck, and tried it again.

All this time those that were below were coming up slowly, and one by one, looking round cautiously as they stepped on deck, with a wild expression in their faces, as if they could not believe it, and did not exactly know what was going on.

There were several women who rushed up first, and began to scream and cry. But the captain told them to go down again and be quiet, and wait till they were called, for they could do no good; and so all of them excepting two went down again, and their husbands mostly with them, all very scared.

Presently the mate, who was superintending at the pumps, said: "We had better stop, as it is no good trying any longer."

Then the captain came among us, and said: "You go for'ard, my man, and ring the bell as hard as ever you can,"—which I turned to do.

I went below, however, to look after some of my friends. I saw one, Jem Thomson, lying in his bunk with his clothes over him, and I pulled them off and shook him, and cried out to him that he had better come on deck, for the water was rising to the main-deck; but he looked at me in a stupid sort of way, and groaned, and shook his head. "God help me!" said he; "I may as well be drowned here. O God, have mercy on me!" I tried for a moment to pull him out, and drag him along with me; but he was like a log, and wouldn't help me more than a baby.

They were groaning and crying all round me. Some of them were getting their boxes out, and some were putting on their clothes; and when I told them it was useless to stay down below, they asked me what was the matter, and was it really so bad as some of us had told them? I could stop no longer; so I ran up the foremost hatchway, past the bell, which I had quite forgotten, and as I came along I saw the mate and the storekeeper and two or three of the sailors pulling away at the ropes of the foremost life-boat.

The wind was beginning to blow and whistle through the rigging, and I could see that the fore part of the vessel was sinking near the level of the water. The mate cried out to

me to give him a hand in lowering the boat for the captain's wife and the women ; and I took hold of one of the ropes, but as they were somewhat confused, or the pulleys would not work, we were unable with all our efforts to get the boat down. As I looked round I saw the crowd on the deck getting thicker and thicker, and I noticed the captain's wife coming along wrapped up in a rug, and looking as pale, poor lady, and as sad, as if she were going to die that moment !

There was a terrible panic, I can tell you, among the strong, rough men, when it became apparent that the vessel was sinking. The wild rush for the boats, and the mad confusion which took place, were like the trampling of a herd of buffaloes. Poor Captain Knowles, brave as a hero all the time, was nevertheless angered at the reckless selfishness of the men, and he drew a pistol and threatened the big fellows who were leaping helter-skelter into the boats. He said : "The boats are not for such as you ; they are for the women and children."

So much confusion prevailed on board, that no one seemed to know what could or should be done. About a dozen women had come upon deck, and were sobbing and crying among the men, and refused to go down again. I cast my eye along the other side of the ship, and saw a knot of men round a boat, which they were lowering. The captain's voice rose now and then above the praying and crying, but I do not know that any one paid attention to him.

When the boat had been lowered, two or three men immediately slid along the ropes and got into her as she was being lifted up and down by the waves ; and as all were making a rush for her, the captain came up, and cried with a loud voice, "Hold hard, men,—don't go down." But they disregarded him. They were determined to get off. And so he

pointed a pistol at them, and said, "I'll shoot the first man that goes down."

Even this threat did not check them, and one of them cried out: "Shoot us, would you? We may as well be shot by you as be drowned with you;" and so they tumbled and scrambled as before. The captain called out again to stop them, and fired his pistol at one man; but the cap missed fire, and in trying to save himself the man slipped his foot and fell. The others, however, continued their efforts to reach the boat, and so the captain shouted again that he would blow their brains out if they did not obey; then he fired a second shot. This time he nearly hit a man who was half-way over the bulwark; but the bullet went over his head and never touched him. Then suddenly arose a cry from below, "Cast her off; she's full."

The boatswain raged, but in vain. "I'll cut off the hand of the next man that gets into this boat," he bellowed out; but before he had finished his speech, half a dozen men had tumbled in, rightly judging that if they were going to be drowned, a hand more or less on their wrists was of small account. Then the captain came down with his pistol in his hand. "Get back, if you are men," he roared, "and let the women pass." But men or not, they cared for nothing or nobody in the panic, and still pressed forward, threatening to swamp the boat, and drown themselves into the bargain. "I'll shoot the next man that steps in!" cried the captain, levelling his pistol; and he was as good as his word, bringing down by a shot in the thigh a man, who none the less kept his place in the boat. This quieted the others a bit.

In the midst of the din and confusion the captain's wife was being lowered into the boat on the starboard side. She had been aroused by her husband, who assisted her to dress, and as a precaution against sinking, she put on a cork belt.

As she was descending, the captain waved his hand and said, "Good-bye, my dear, good-bye;" and his wife replied, "Good-bye, my love; I do not expect to see you any more." At this juncture the fore-end of the ship pitched under water, and washed all who were standing on the quarter-deck to the middle-deck. The captain was heard to exclaim, "Take care of my wife, boatswain;" to which the boatswain replied, "I will, captain; if she goes, I will go with her." The fate of all was now seen to be near. The captain stood on the deck very quietly, looking at the ship as she went down, and waving his hand to his wife.

All this time I, with one or two others, was struggling at the boats on the deck between the main and mizzen masts. Several men were lying on their faces, and, do whatever we could, we were unable to move them. It had seemed an hour since I first saw the funnel coming through the darkness, and heard the crash; but however long it was—and I believe twenty minutes was the outside—it was clear the last moment was near at hand. The ship was going down fast, and we others, seeing nothing else for it, jumped on the top of the pile of boats. One poor fellow who jumped up with me held out his hand, and said, "My last moment's come; if you should live to get ashore, tell mother I was thinking of her when I went down."

"All right," was my reply, "I will; and if I should go and you should get ashore, tell my mother likewise that my last thought was of her."

It was curious, but I did not know who he was, nor did he know me, though of course we could not think of it at the time. It would have been hard for either of us to deliver the message; but he is all right, and can carry his own message, as I hope to do mine.

In another minute the sea rose to the level of the poop,

and the crowd which stood shrieking there seemed to mingle with it and all disappear in white foam. Then I myself was struggling in the water, and was just thinking to myself what a long time I was in being drowned, when I came up, and putting forth my hands, got hold of some rigging. I clung to it; to my surprise I found it did not sink; and presently others came up and got hold of it.

It was the rigging of the main-mast that I had chanced to rise against; but the other two masts were also above the water, and we could see figures clinging desperately to them. Here we hung for two hours and a half, the wind growing colder and colder, and the sea rising higher and higher. Some of the men were getting benumbed, and when a steamer once came within sight of us, and passed on without heeding our screams for help, they became desperate, and said they must let go; but we cheered them up, and at last a pilot-boat came alongside, and took us off.

This simple but graphic narrative places before us very plainly the principal features of a scene of unusual distress and horror. Most wrecks are the result of causes over which man has no direct control; and while we regret their occurrence, we humbly feel that God moves in a mysterious way, and that it is not for us to question the operations of His providence. But, humanly speaking, the loss of the *Northfleet*, and the destruction of her unhappy living freight, were the work of cruel, reckless, and savage men. Every circumstance connected with it serves to deepen the impression produced. The crowded vessel lay at anchor off the English coast, in a position which seemed exceptionally secure; the surrounding waters were crowded by ships, wind-bound, like herself; she was near a native port, and pilot-boats lay within hail; no hurricane blew with irresistible fury, no roaring breakers tore the goodly bark to pieces, plank by plank. The *Northfleet*

went down in a comparatively calm sea, and in circumstances which seemed to ensure an almost absolute immunity from danger.

"It was not in the battle ;
No tempest gave the shock ;
She sprang no fatal leak ;
She ran upon no rock."

Nor was the catastrophe due to any negligence on the part of her crew or commander. The watch were vigilant ; the lights were burning clearly ; the usual precautions had been taken. Yet right upon the hapless ship, as she rested in apparent security, with nearly four hundred souls on board, drove the reckless foreign steamer, crashing relentlessly into her shivering side, heeding neither shout nor signal ; and having wrought irreparable ruin, heartlessly releasing herself from the wreck, and without staying to ascertain the amount of evil work she had done, or attempting to save a single life, slinking away under cover of the darkness, like a thief in the night. For the honour of our humanity, we are glad to think that one has seldom to record an act of such utter treachery and baseness.

What followed on board the *Northfleet* seems to point to a deplorable want of order, control, and heroic patience. A large proportion of the emigrants were reckless "navvies," whose only thought was self-preservation, and who lost their lives, in some measure, through their craven anxiety to preserve them. Captain Knowles very splendidly maintained the reputation of the British seaman, and was gallantly seconded by those of his crew who were English ; but what could a handful of men avail the rushing, tearing, shrieking, panic-stricken throng of emigrants, who poured out upon the decks, and in the presence of immediate death lost all manliness, all sense of obedience, all generous feeling ?

It is a singular circumstance that the rockets fired from

the *Northfleet*, though seen on shore, passed unnoticed by the numerous vessels lying almost within gunshot. It is said that those who *did* observe them supposed that they were intended as signals for a pilot, and had no idea of the calamity that was occurring so near them. An Australian clipper was moored within three hundred yards of the spot where the *Northfleet* went down; but the look-out on deck was, unhappily, a phlegmatic Dutchman, who must have seen the rockets, and heard the agonizing cries of the sufferers, yet failed to alarm his comrades. Had it been otherwise, it is probable that most, if not all, of the crew and passengers of the *Northfleet* would have been saved.

As it was, out of the three hundred and seventy-nine persons on board when she dropped anchor off Dungeness, only eighty-six were rescued. These owed their lives to the exertions of the crews of the *Princess* pilot-cutter, the *City of London* steam-tug, and the *Mary* of Kingsdown, a lugger. The last-named fell in with a boat-load of "navvies," who had left women and children to perish, and cut themselves adrift without oars or rudder. The *Princess* was cruising to see if any vessel wanted a pilot, when her captain observed the *Northfleet's* rockets, and supposing that his services were required, answered them in the usual fashion. On standing towards her, however, he saw that she was sinking, and immediately lowered his boats, which took off several persons clinging to the upper spars of the wreck. The *City of London* was also aroused by the rockets, and steamed at once to the scene of disaster; her crew succeeded in saving thirty-four.

There were on board the *Northfleet* forty-one or forty-two married couples and their children—in all, one hundred and forty-three persons—and of these only three men, a woman, and two children were rescued.

In the narrative given above, it is related that a man, who persisted in getting into one of the ship's boats before the women and children, was shot by Captain Knowles. He was named Biddies, and was a "navvy," going out to Tasmania to work on a new railway. This man Biddies was one of the eighty-six who escaped, and was taken to Dover hospital to have his wounds dressed. Here he told his pathetic story, which may be held to contain some excuse for his conduct. He said that when the discovery was made that the water had reached the main-deck, and the floating chests and boxes could be heard knocking and beating against the upper deck, he was desirous of saving some things of his own, and leaving the pump, went below in search of them. He then found that the water had risen to the top of the stairs leading to the deck on which his cabin was situated. He saw the panic increasing; some men were going to and fro in search of their wives and children; others were making ready for the catastrophe—which all knew to be imminent, unless assistance came from the shore or from a passing vessel—by seizing upon spare spars, ladders, pails, indeed anything that would float, while others were rushing in disorder to the boats.

When he saw that these were fast filling with men, he felt inclined to make an effort to save his own life, and sprang into a boat at the stern, which lay almost directly under the captain's eye. Here in the bow crouched the captain's weeping wife, under the care of the boatswain. Captain Knowles observed his movements, and anxious that the terrified women should have every opportunity of escape, ordered him to leave the boat. Biddies, knowing that the ship would sink almost immediately he got on board, and that this was his last chance for life, resolutely refused to obey. The captain repeated the order, threatening him with his pistol, and the boatswain endeavoured to force him out; but he per-

sisted in maintaining his post. Then Captain Knowles signed to the boatswain to stand clear, and discharged his revolver at the intruder's head.

This shot, however, missed its mark, and he fired again. The second time, the bullet lodged itself in the flesh just above the left knee. The pain from the wound was acute, but Biddies almost forgot it in the terror and agony produced by the shrieks, sobs, groans, and cries for help which came from on board the foundering vessel, and almost drowned the incessant clang of its alarm-bell. The boat in which Biddies lay wounded and helpless was still alongside, and some of the poor creatures on board the wreck rushed towards the stern with the view of jumping into it; but Knowles heroically stood steadfast in his resolve to save the women. Again he aimed his revolver at the first man who made for the boat, and pulled the trigger; but again it missed fire.

The boat now sheered off, containing nine persons—the captain's wife, the boatswain, and four “navvies,” together with three of the crew—and was picked up by the tug, which had now reached the spot. At this moment, the figure-head of the *Northfleet* sank slowly under water; the crowded stern rose up in the air; and with a loud rushing noise, and a terrible sound of shrieks and moans, the ship almost immediately disappeared. The sea was covered for a while with spars and fragments of wreck, amongst which might be seen many a sufferer struggling desperately for life, and contending with the raging waves,

“Till all exhausted, and bereft of strength,
O'erpowered, they yield to cruel fate at length;
The burying waters close around their head,—
They sink! for ever numbered with the dead.”

We conclude with a brief quotation from the narrative given by another of the survivors, which was published at

the time in the London papers. It refers to the last dreadful minutes :—

“ Near the women’s hatchway I came upon a lot of women clustered together. I did not stop to speak to them, for I was looking towards the boats, thinking that perhaps I might get hold of one of them yet. They were all turned upside down, and knocking about. Two of them were half floating in the sea, and tearing away at their ropes ; and some of the men were trying to turn another up, and get into it. While I was running towards that one, and holding on by the bulwark, I felt a shaking of the deck, and a fearful shout from for’ard. At the same moment the deck seemed to be taken from under my feet ; there was a crash, and another ; the masts seemed to be giving way. Everybody clung to everybody else, and begged and prayed to be saved ; and one woman came up to me, and gave me her baby, saying, ‘ For the love of God, save this innocent thing ! ’ But I could not do anything, for I felt the last had come.

“ And so it had, for in a moment the water seemed to rise to my lips, and rush into my ears and eyes, and it pressed upon me from all sides, and knocked me against the side, and I was under,—I could feel *that*. So I gave a lift up and struck out, my boots going away of themselves, and my jacket getting as heavy as a ton of bricks. But I was up again and afloat ; so I swam for the bulwarks, when I was knocked over again and sucked under. I don’t know how I managed to get off clear.

“ I have some recollection of being laid hold of several times, and kicking and tearing myself away. I think I remember other figures coming to me and trying to take hold of my shoulders ; but I felt I had got some life in me yet,—just enough for myself, and no more,—and I struggled hard for that little bit. I thought of nothing but keeping afloat


until I was clear and away from the wreck, for she was sucking under me and drawing me down. At last I got clear, and out of reach of those who were trying to swim, or drifting about on bits of wood, the boats, and life-buoys. How I kept afloat, and was picked up, I do not remember.'

It remains to be added that the steamer which so carelessly ran down the *Northfleet*, and so cruelly left the hundreds on board of her to perish, is, with good reason, supposed to have been a Spanish screw-steamer, named the *Murillo*; but her captain escaped the punishment he well deserved through the impossibility of obtaining direct legal proof. At least, the evidence was pronounced insufficient by the Spanish authorities, though it was admitted that the *Murillo* had come into collision with a vessel at Dungeness, exactly at the time and in the spot where and when the *Northfleet* had perished. Only it was pleaded that that vessel was not the *Northfleet*, though of no other was any accident reported !

LIII.

WRECK OF THE "ATLANTIC."

April 1, 1873.



THE *Atlantic* was one of the "White Star" line of noble steamers, running between Liverpool and New York. A well-built and stately vessel, of heavy tonnage, and provided with every modern scientific device for combining strength and swiftness, she bore a high reputation among the great Transatlantic steamships which cross the ocean with such wonderful regularity, and assist in maintaining the friendly intercourse between the Old World and the New.

On the 20th of March 1873, she sailed from Liverpool "outward," having on board no fewer than 931 persons,—the population of a large village! Many of these were emigrants, going out to woo the fickle goddess Fortune in the West. She had not long lost sight of British shores before she encountered heavy equinoctial storms, which continued for some days. Their violence increased to such an extent that Captain Williams resolved on making for the port of Halifax, in Nova Scotia. This was on the 31st of March.

After seeing everything made snug, the captain, at midnight, retired to rest in the chart-room, leaving instructions with the officer of the watch to call him at three o'clock. He

knew that his vessel was nearing a dangerous coast, and it was his design, therefore, to steer in a southerly direction, and wait for daylight before he bore up for the land. The chief officer had also retired, and the *Atlantic* was in charge of the second and third officers, when, a few minutes after three o'clock A.M., she suddenly struck. The watch had but just exchanged the customary salutation, "All's well," when the terrible alarm was given, "Breakers ahead!"—an alarm succeeded by a heavy crash, which seemed to loosen every plank in the vessel, and make her tall masts quiver like reeds.

It was soon found that nothing could move her. She lay hard and fast, with the pitiless billows beating against her sides. Away went all the boats on the port side; and as she speedily heeled over, those on the starboard were also rendered useless. The captain and officers were now on deck, and advised the passengers to secure themselves to the rigging, as their only protection against the wild waves which swooped down upon the wreck with such fatal force. At a distance of about one hundred and fifty feet rose an elevated rock, and to this stay the seamen contrived to carry five lines, affording a frail and dangerous communication with the ship. Between the rock and the shore was a further distance of one hundred yards, and this passage was also bridged by a rope, which overhung the boiling waves beneath.

The captain and his officers behaved with a courage and a presence of mind worthy of British seamen, and, utterly regardless of their own lives, strove as best they could to save the lives of the weeping and terrified passengers. Mr. Brady, the third officer, and two quartermasters, swam ashore with the rope, which was the only means of escape, and assisted many to avail themselves of it. It is said that two hundred persons accomplished the trajet from the wreck to the rock.

About fifty ventured on the more perilous passage from the rock to the shore, but of these several were drowned in the raging billows. Owing to the intense cold, many were benumbed, and the rope slipped from their frozen fingers.

The consternation on board the *Atlantic* after she had struck was indescribable. It was not at first that the passengers could realize the full extent of the calamity. Some thought the boiler had burst; others that the ship had come into collision with an iceberg. Hundreds of the steerage passengers were drowned in their berths; they slept, ignorant of the danger, until the cold waves dashed in upon them, and rose to their lips. Then, one wild startled cry, and all was hushed! Of those who made their way to the deck or clambered into the rigging, tens and scores were washed away by the inrush of waters. The fore-boom broke loose, and swinging to and fro, crushed the unfortunates who chanced to be within its range. Then, again, there were not a few who, in a sudden frenzy, threw themselves headlong into the sea, and were carried out of sight in an instant.

At dawn of day a boat from Meagher's Island reached the rock; but she was too small to remove any of the survivors. Mr. Brady, however, contrived to get into the frail little skiff, and by his exertions three larger boats were manned and launched, and in the course of several trips carried off a considerable number. Others, as we have said, ventured along the life-lines.

Captain Williams remained on the wreck, issuing his orders with admirable composure, and doing his best to direct, tranquillize, and encourage, until his hands and feet were frozen, when he was rescued by one of the boats. Mr. Firth, the chief-officer, was also saved. Along with thirty-two passengers, one of whom was a lady, he had taken refuge in the mizzen-mast rigging. Many of his companions, ob-

serving the use made of the life-lines, resorted to the same means of escape ; but one by one the ocean received them. Others were carried off by the boats, so that at last only Mr. Firth, the lady, and a boy remained. The sea had risen to such an extent that the boats could not approach the wreck ; but the boy, being washed off, made a courageous effort, swam skilfully and steadily, reached one of the boats, and was taken on board. Mr. Firth then caught hold of the unfortunate lady, and lashed her to the rigging as a final resource, though neither for him nor her did there seem any hope.

Their perilous condition was observed on shore by the parish clergyman, a Mr. Ancient, who in the true heroic spirit put off in a small boat, accompanied by four volunteers, to attempt their rescue. Mr. Ancient succeeded in obtaining a footing in the main rigging, from which he flung a rope to Mr. Firth, who fastened it round his body, sprang into the sea, and was hauled on board the boat. It was found unnecessary to make any effort on behalf of the unfortunate lady ; she was frozen to death.

Out of the nine hundred and thirty-one persons on board the *Atlantic* at the time she struck, four hundred and eighty-one, including two hundred and ninety-five women and children, were lost. That four hundred and fifty were saved, was due in a great measure to the noble exertions of Captain Williams and his officers, and the gallantry of the fishermen of Meagher's Island, led, as they were, by Mr. Ancient, and stimulated by his example of intrepidity and self-denial. But they not only dared the perils of a stormy sea to rescue the unfortunate passengers of the *Atlantic* : they provided clothing for the naked and food for the hungry ; they gave up 'to them their beds and cottages ; they laboured on their behalf with

the most touching generosity. It is a curious circumstance that not one female was saved. The women proved unable to bear the severe cold, the exhaustion, and the terror ; and many were frozen as they clung helplessly to the rigging, or lost their presence of mind and loosened their grasp as they attempted the passage from the ship to the rock.

The coast on which the *Atlantic* was lost has long borne an ill repute among our seamen ; and bristling as it does with rocks and reefs, and fenced as it is by sunken shoals, we need not wonder that it is the scene of frequent disasters. There is reason to believe, however, that the wreck of the *Atlantic* was caused by the neglect of proper precautions. The lead was not used in sounding, and the watch did not maintain a sufficiently vigilant look-out. A court of inquiry was held into the circumstances attending the disaster, and Captain Williams was severely censured ; but, in recognition of his courage and his efforts to save the lives of his passengers after the catastrophe, his certificate was suspended only for two years.

LIV.

WRECK OF THE "VILLE-DU-HAVRE."

November 21, 1873.



THE wreck of the *Ville-du-Havre*, and the unfortunate circumstances attending it, are graphically described in the following letter from one of her passengers, dated November 29, 1873:—

The *Ville-du-Havre* foundered at two o'clock in the morning of the 21st. Her crew and passengers numbered 313 in all; of these, 226 perished.

We left New York on the 15th, the weather being splendid. On Monday evening, a tolerably heavy gale arose; next day, a second storm was experienced, which broke one blade of our screw. From this time a dense fog hung upon the sea; and for three days and three nights our gallant captain never quitted the poop. At length, on Thursday, the 20th, the weather cleared, the wind went down, the children on board resumed their little sports; everything breathed of happiness and security.

At two o'clock on Friday morning a violent shock shivered our vessel from stem to stern. We all sprang from our berths, dressed ourselves hastily, and ran upon deck. About two hundred yards off lay a three-master, the *Loch Earn*, having her figure-head carried away. The *Ville-du-Havre*

was leaning over to larboard. Was she then about to capsize?

She had been struck on the starboard side, just athwart the main-mast, and the water rushed in through a gap several yards in width. She quickly began to reel to and fro; the masts went by the board, and, in falling, crushed a boat containing upwards of thirty individuals, which was on the point of being lowered. Numerous victims might be seen on every side, with their limbs broken by falling spars, or by collision with the ship's bulwarks, as the wild waters drove them about. In the stern quarters of the ship a group of women prayed aloud, and took leave of one another. A priest, rising above all thought of personal danger in his heroic self-devotion, moved from one to another, uttering words of consolation and encouragement. It is true though wonderful that no one uttered a cry, no one showed any sign of agitation; that beautiful group of women praying seemed to inspire everybody with resignation.

About twelve minutes after our collision with the *Loch Eurn*, the fore part of the ship sank under the waves, and I felt myself descending into the depths, dragged downward by the boiling vortex which the ship left yawning behind her. How I rose again to the surface I do not know; but while supporting myself on a spar which had come within reach, I met with a swimmer floating between a couple of buoys. He consented to pass me one, and a moment afterwards I was driven against some planking, which proved to be the roof of the caboose. After many efforts, I contrived to haul myself up on this waif, from which I gazed horror-stricken on the frightful scene around me. Yonder floated a yard, to which upwards of twenty persons were clinging desperately; every moment a head disappeared, and at last

only two persons remained, who were taken off by a boat just as their strength was failing them. Cries of "Save me! save me!" rang out on every side. "Oh, my father!" or "Oh, my child!"—then prolonged moans of despair—followed by a dead silence, broken only by the ominous murmur of the waves.

At last a French boat picked me up, and I was carried on board the *Loch Earn*, the three-master which had run us down. While her captain and crew eagerly vied with one another in clothing and warming the unfortunate sufferers, the boats belonging to both ships rowed to and fro in every direction, and succeeded in saving many. Captain Surmont, who maintained his post on the poop to the last moment, issued orders for lowering boat after boat. He and his officers did not take advantage of the asylum afforded by the *Loch Earn* until they had assured themselves that all was over, that there were none remaining whom the most vigorous energy and the most unselfish heroism could save.

It is impossible to describe the horrible details of such a catastrophe,—a catastrophe all the more melancholy that it occurred on a bright and starry night, and in calm, delightful weather.

The captain of the *Loch Earn* treated us as honoured guests, and lavished kind attentions upon us. His ship, he said, was built of iron, and the water-tight compartment in the fore part had protected her against the sea. He would make the necessary repairs, and carry us back to Europe.

But soon afterwards an American three-master, the *Trimountain*, came within hail; and on learning what had occurred, her commander, Captain Urquhart, offered to take us all on board. After due consideration, Captain Surmont and his passengers decided on accepting this generous proposal.

WRECK OF THE "VILLE-DU-HAVRE"



A week has elapsed since we found shelter on board the *Trimountain*, where we all live on terms of the most cordial good-fellowship. At eight o'clock every evening we assemble in the captain's cabin and read a chapter of the Bible; after which we address ourselves to Him who has so marvellously delivered us, in humble prayer and thanksgiving.

The day before yesterday we were overtaken by a storm of considerable violence, but the weather has cleared again, the wind is in our favour, and, God willing, we shall soon see the white cliffs of England.

Land! our hearts tremble at that magic word; for it seems as if Ocean had invaded space, and that we should never more reach port.

What must be the anxiety of those dear friends and kinsmen who are awaiting us with so much impatience!..... Before leaving the *Trimountain* we handed to Captain Urquhart a document signed by all of us, expressing our deep gratitude for the eagerness with which he had succoured us in our great distress, for his cordial and generous hospitality, his ardent sympathy, and beseeching Heaven to bless him and his family.

The injuries sustained by the *Loch Earn* in her collision with the *Ville-du-Havre* were so serious that her crew were unable to keep under the leak. The bows of the ship had been more severely damaged than was at first supposed, and the waves, beating furiously against the partitions, speedily opened a passage into the hold. Shortly after her fatal encounter with the *Ville-du-Havre*, the *Loch Earn* foundered in her turn. Happily, her signals of distress had been seen by the *British Queen*, which bore down rapidly to her assistance, and succeeded in saving her officers and crew.

LV.

WRECK OF THE "CHUSAN."

October 21, 1874.



THE calamity we are about to describe was marked by some singular features. It occurred at the entrance to a well-known harbour, in sight of a large number of the inhabitants; and a portion of the wrecked ship, after the catastrophe had occurred, floated safely into port, as if returning from a pleasant summer excursion. It is certain that such a combination of circumstances never before took place; and the following account will show that other details were of a strangely interesting character.

On the coast of Ayr, and nearly at the mouth of the estuary of the Clyde, lies Ardrossan Harbour, the principal centre of the exportation of iron on the west of Scotland. Just off the harbour is situated the Horse Isle, which serves as a kind of natural breakwater, some hundred yards to the north-west of the pier; and nearer inshore lies the Crinan Rock, about four hundred yards from the pier, and visible at low ebb-tides. Owing to these obstacles, the access to Ardrossan is difficult in dark or stormy weather, and specially so when the wind blows from the north-west.

The *Chusan* was a new and handsome paddle-steamer,

built for the China local service between Shanghai and Hankow, with a tonnage of 1380 tons. She measured 306 feet in length, with 50 feet beam, and carried a single cylinder engine of 1010 horse-power. Launched from the yard of Messrs. Elder and Co., at Fairfield on the Clyde, on the 17th of September, she was completed with all possible expedition; and on the 10th of October, having satisfactorily passed her trial-trip at Wemyss Bay, steamed for Waterford, whence she was to set out for Shanghai, by way of the Suez Canal. While in St. George's Channel she got one of her paddle-wings damaged, and put in for repair on the Irish coast; but the damage proved so serious that her captain resolved to carry her back to the Clyde to be thoroughly refitted. At this time she had on board a cargo of coals of about one thousand tons, and a crew of forty-six men, all told, comprising the captain, first and second officers, four engineers, three stewards, purser, sixteen firemen, and a pilot, besides Lascars and negroes. There were also on board Captain King, who was going out to China on service, Mrs. Johnson, the captain's wife, her little son, a boy of four years and a half old, and Helen Elliot, her sister.

The *Chusan* left Waterford early on Tuesday morning, the weather being moderately fine, and the wind from the north-west. Her progress up Channel was very favourable until she was off the Maidens, a group of islands on the north-west Irish coast, which are lighted, when the wind backed down to the southward, and it settled in to blow from the south-west, very freshly, and accompanied by rain. As in this kind of weather it was dangerous to keep so close to the Irish coast, the vessel's course was altered, and the ship kept more away over by the Galloway shore. The pyramidal rock of Ailsa Craig was left close on the starboard beam, but after that the vessel bore in towards Pladda. The gale con-

tinued, the wind gradually changing to the north, and about three o'clock in the morning blowing strongly from the north-west. The *Chusan* was then kept in as straight a course as possible to run between the Cumbrae Islands; but her great breadth of beam, and her freeboard, which exposed so much surface to the heavy running sea, made her steer very badly, until at length she scarcely answered her helm.

It became evident, at length, that she would not lie far enough up to get into the mouth of the Clyde, but was drawing nearer and nearer to the Ayrshire coast. Between three and four o'clock her fore-staysail was set in the hope it would help her course, but the effect was inappreciable. As they came in sight of the blazing furnaces of the ironworks at Kilwinning and Ardeer, the pilot and those on board were able to form an idea of their whereabouts, and determined to run for Ardrossan Harbour, the lights of which were plainly visible. On shore at Ardrossan the approach of the *Chusan* was watched by many, though they supposed that she was the steamer which trades between that port and Belfast. They watched, however, with keen anxiety, for the gale then raging was stronger, in the belief of old seafaring men, than any which had been experienced on the coast for years.

As the *Chusan* approached the harbour her position became very critical, for the wind blew from the north-west, the night was dark, and the sea rolled heavily. Strange to say, she cleared the Horse Isle in safety, though it is probable that in the darkness the pilot never noticed it. Right in her teeth, as it were, now lay the Crinan Rock, upon which were several feet of water, as it was within an hour of full tide. As she drew more into the channel, those on shore who were acquainted with the position of the rock perceived that she was in imminent danger. She ran well up the leeward entrance into the harbour, until the Crinan Rock lay on her

starboard beam ; and then, caught either by the swing of the tide or by a sudden squall, she closed in upon the perilous obstacle instead of keeping away ; and though the engines were backed immediately, she still luffed up to windward, and, striking hard just aft of the forward stokehole,—that is, in the compartment immediately in front of the engines,—was soon a complete wreck.

And now a remarkable occurrence has to be recorded. The aft part of the unfortunate *Chusan* went down on the spot where she had struck. The fore part, which had broken off as cleanly as a stick snapped in twain, sailed off in the direction of the harbour, and, borne onward by the tide, passed between the breakwaters, proceeded to the top of the harbour, and there took up a berth beside a couple of coasting vessels as easily and promptly as if she had been under the control of a skilful pilot. The whole history of shipwreck and disaster at sea presents no parallel to this singular incident.

Needless to say that the wreck of the *Chusan* was marked by many painful scenes. The people of Ardrossan, gathered on the beach, or thronging the harbour pier, listened with aching hearts to the shrieks and cries of the sufferers, whose forms, indeed, as the gray dawn crept over the deep, could be indistinctly discerned. The harbour steam-tug proceeded to the aft part of the vessel, and succeeded in taking off several persons who were clinging to it. The life-boat was manned, and made a gallant attempt to reach the wreck, but was beaten back by the furious storm. Then the tug came to its assistance and took it out, when it rescued six persons. The surrounding waters, says an eye-witness, presented a piteous spectacle. Several of the crew had jumped into the sea, and struck out for the shore ; so that, at one time, half-a-dozen were struggling in the foamy waves near the

steamer, and others between it and the shore. Most of these perished. Many more might have been saved, but for two reasons: first, the delay in manning the life-boat, owing to the absence of the commander and several men; and next, the unreadiness of the rocket apparatus, which, when so urgently wanted, could not be used. The *white* persons saved were—John Murdoch, first mate; William Gardiner and William Ortwin, first and second engineers; William Wrench and George Marr, third and fourth engineers; Edwin Humphreys, purser; Mrs. Johnson, her sister, and child; Moir, the pilot; and Captain King. The captain of the *Chusan* was drowned, and also William Miller, the second mate. The principal loss of life, however, befell the unfortunate coloured seamen.

Some gallant deeds were done on this occasion, which may fairly and properly be balanced against the unfortunate error we have been called upon to notice with respect to the life-boat and rocket apparatus. In a Glasgow daily journal we find the following narrative:—

The captain, with his wife and child, and several of the crew, were clinging to a spar; and a line having been passed to them from the steam-tug, some of the men were rescued. The captain was observed holding his wife and child, and striving desperately to prevent them from being washed away. He succeeded in getting them attached to the line; but the men in the tug being unable to pull all three on board, the captain relaxed his grasp of the rope, and thus, to save his wife and child, was drowned. One man, who was himself hanging to the boom along with the captain's wife, seeing her child washed from her enfeebled arms, rescued it on two occasions. Another, who was caught between some floating spars, sank and perished just as assistance came within

his reach. Captain King, one of those on board, was clinging to the boom, when a wave flung him on the deck. He contrived to lay hold of a piece of wood, and struck out for the shore. After swimming a short distance, he was observed by the tug, which steamed towards him and picked him up. Several of the men supported themselves on floating pieces of wreck, and in this way endeavoured to reach land.

A graphic account of the circumstances attending the wreck was given by John Murdoch, the first mate. He said :—

We left Glasgow on Saturday the 10th, bound to Shanghai, with a Channel pilot and two passengers on board. We put into Waterford for the purpose of landing the pilot, but found that the ship was not fit for a heavy sea. The fore part was all adrift; which was owing, I think, to want of strength in the construction of the vessel. The surveyors at Waterford condemned her as unseaworthy, and she was coming back to Glasgow for repairs and to get strengthened. We left Waterford with fine, light, moderate weather; wind from the south-west. When the ship was abreast of the Maidens the wind veered round to the north-west, and we held away on the other shore, as the weather got thick. We steered for the Cumraes. The gale increased, with the wind from the north-west, until it blew a hurricane. The ship would not answer her helm, and was unmanageable. There were four men at the wheel—the second officer, named William Miller, two quartermasters, and a seaman. Three were washed overboard, the second officer and the two quartermasters. The steamer being intended as a river-boat, was utterly unable to stand a heavy sea.

We made for Ardrossan, to prevent her going to pieces, and on entering the harbour struck against the [Crinan] rock.

Before this happened, one of the quartermasters had three of his fingers cut off at the wheel, and he was lying in the cabin at the moment the *Chusan* struck. I suppose he is drowned. When she struck, and the rudder touched the bottom, the force of the blow was so great as to precipitate one of the men at the wheel right into the sea. Four men were working the wheel at the time, and three of them were washed away. [This seems like a confused repetition of a previous statement.]

The decks of the vessel, continues the mate, were iron, and were already contracted, or shrunk up, before she ran ashore. The *Chusan* was 3590 tons, builders' measurement; but she was only half fitted up, the intention being to equip her completely, in the same style as the American river-boats, on her arrival in China. When we left Glasgow we had nothing on board but eight hundred and forty tons of coal, with the exception, of course, of water, and provisions in proportion. The weight was nine hundred and fifty tons in all. The *Chusan* belonged to a Shanghai firm.

I was not at all pleased,—says the mate, with graphic simplicity,—I was not at all pleased with the life-boat arrangements of this part of the coast, for I and the pilot were hanging on to the mast for hours before we were taken off. The pilot, Mr. Moir, whom we had with us from Glasgow, came back with us in the ship, and had charge of it. He was saved, although slightly injured.

The *Chusan* was a paddle-steamer, and on striking she divided in two at the fore-compartment, at a point where we had found a defect on the passage to Waterford. The night was as dark and dirty as any I have ever seen.

The clothes of all the men were in the fore-part of the vessel, and consequently saved; but none of the officers' clothing was recovered. It was about six o'clock in the

morning when the vessel struck, and an hour elapsed before any help was given. Had there been a rocket apparatus ready ashore, no lives would have been lost, except those who were killed or drowned while on duty at the wheel.

The harbour-master at Ardrossan, Mr. Steele, furnished the *Glasgow News* with an interesting account of the calamity, as it was seen from the shore :—

I was on my usual duty about the harbour, he says, when the *Chusan* came in sight. I at once observed that she was in danger, and battling with the storm to reach the shore. She was seemingly standing in straight for the harbour. Becoming aware of this, I ordered out a number of men; and we stood on the pier ready with “heaving lines” to throw to her the moment she came within reach. I watched her making progress for some time, but suddenly I saw that she swung with her head to the north. She came ahead on the other side of the Crinan Rock, about half the length of herself. This was about half an hour after we first observed her. She was much stressed, and the water was dashing over her. We could make out that the engines were working. When she was within half the length of herself to the north of the rock she reversed her engines, and backed sternwards to sea.

This we could plainly see through the gray daylight, though it was a little hazy. She had just backed about half the length of herself when she stopped suddenly. The engines still appeared to be going, but she was utterly powerless against the strength of the elements. At this time she had not touched the rock.

We then saw that she struck on the rock, carrying away the beacon which stands on the Crinan as a signal. There was no light on the rock. Immediately after she had carried

away the beacon, a heavy sea lifted the vessel up, and when she came down she separated in two portions. The fore-part came away towards the harbour, and the stern sank rapidly, and was soon hidden from our view. The fore-part drifted straight into the harbour, and took up the position [already described]. When that portion was within a few yards of the side of the vessels lying at their berths, three of the men made an attempt to get ashore, and two of them arrived safely, but the third fell and was washed away. All the three were negroes.....

At the earliest possible moment I despatched men to collect the life-boat's crew, and I believe this was done with all haste; but I cannot speak accurately as to time. [From other sources it is known that the delay was considerable.] We have a first-class life-boat here, and a well-organized crew; but several of the men are coast-guardsmen, and were absent on drill. We had no difficulty in procuring men, however. There were a great many volunteers, and we soon had the boat manned. I think the crew consisted of fourteen. The men got the boat launched, and pulled as they best could towards the wreck, but could not reach it. They could not succeed in getting out of the harbour. The first half of the *Chusan* was in the harbour before the life-boat went out.

As the life-boat was straining ineffectually to get out of the harbour, we called to the tug to come and take it out. Our voices could not be heard, however, but by means of signals we got her to come in and tug out the life-boat. In that way the life-boat was got out to the wreck, and saved several persons. The tug anchored to the westward of the life-boat, and approached the wreck as near as it could do with safety. In that way all who remained on the wreck were rescued. Twenty minutes or half an hour elapsed between the striking of the ship and its going down by the stern.

Our chronicle is nearly complete, but the reader may be glad of some details of the part played by the steam-tug; and these are supplied by the master, Captain Ballantyne.

He says :—

We did everything in our power to save the lives of those left on the wreck. We took the tug as near the vessel as possible, but the danger of approaching it was very great. We took nine passengers off altogether, including the captain's wife. Our only means of saving them was to throw lines to them, and pull them up separately. We had four or five on board before we took in the captain's wife. The captain and his wife were lashed on the same line, and we dragged them towards us together. The sister of the captain's wife, and the captain's son, a boy of about five years of age, were on another line. At the time we were drawing in the captain and his wife another man was being brought on board on another line. I should like to mention specially the brave conduct of Captain Johnson. While we were dragging the line he was constantly holding up his wife towards us, and he actually succeeded in supporting her until she was within our reach, when he let go the rope, and sank. What was the cause of his loosening his hold, whether he wanted to lighten the burden [there can be little doubt that this was the reason], or whether his hand slipped, I do not know, but he disappeared, and we did not see him again.

We also saved the engineer and the second engineer.

The reason we did not take the rest at that moment was, that they seemed to have fixed themselves to a part of the vessel that remained out of the water, to have secured themselves to the rigging. I called to those on deck to get on to the bridge, but some of them did not do so. If they had done this, they would all have been saved. At one time I counted six persons swimming in the water.

It is unnecessary to add to these accounts, which, taken together, supply the reader with a clear and animated picture of a lamentable catastrophe ; a catastrophe which, we cannot help thinking, ought never to have occurred. A vessel like the *Chusan* ought not to have been sent to sea in the stormy days of October. On the other hand, at a port like Ardrossan the appliances for saving life should always be in readiness.

LVI.

BURNING OF THE "COSPATRICK."

November 18, 1874.



A recent catastrophe at sea has excited such a feeling of horror, or appealed so powerfully to the national sympathies, as the loss of the emigrant-ship *Cospatrick* by fire, in November 1874. And it must be confessed that it was attended with every circumstance of pain and suffering which can possibly add to the intrinsically terrible character of such an event.

The *Cospatrick* was a vessel of 1200 tons, belonging to the port of London, and owned by a highly respectable firm,—Messrs. Shaw, Savill, and Co., of Leadenhall Street. She was built of wood, well found, and carried a crew of forty-four hands. On the 11th of September she sailed from London, bound for New Zealand, with a general cargo on board, and no fewer than 429 passengers, mostly emigrants, seeking fairer fortunes than their own birth-land had found for them, in what has been called the "Great Britain of the future." On good evidence it appears that, at the time of her departure, the *Cospatrick* was in as excellent a condition as could be desired. There were two officers and thirteen hands in each watch; the captain (or master), boatswain, carpenter, sailmaker, cooks, and stewards, not being included in the

watches. There were six boats, each of which was in charge of an officer, petty officer, and four hands, was in thorough order, and ready for immediate use. Proper care had been exercised in the disposal of the cargo. In the fore part of the ship were stowed the coals, and next the coals water in tanks, and next the water came the miscellaneous portion of the cargo. Abreast of the fore-hatchway, on either side of the vessel, were placed the oils, pitch, tar, and paint. Just by the main-hatchway was lodged the emigrants' baggage; a quantity of spirits was stowed "in the run," but completely hidden under the general cargo. Above the coals were stowed the salt provisions; while the remainder of the "food supplies" found a place between the main and after hatchways.

So much for the cargo. On board a ship thus loaded, and carrying so large a number of passengers, it was necessary to guard the use of lights by all possible precautions, and these seem to have been duly taken. At each hatchway shone a lantern, but it was kept locked. The lamps between decks were lighted by the emigrants' steward, and then locked for the night. Constables selected from among the emigrants themselves patrolled the ship between decks to preserve order. Regulations prohibiting smoking and the use of lights were exhibited in each compartment, and strictly enforced under the supervision of the master and the doctor. The hatches leading to the lower hold were kept locked, and it was impossible for any of the crew or passengers to obtain access to them.

A small space aft "between decks" was partitioned off as the boatswain's locker. Here were kept the stores generally most in demand on board ship, such as ropes, oakum, oils and paints, cotton-waste for cleaning lamps, brooms, brushes, and the like; and the key of this locker was always kept by

the boatswain, a steady and experienced man, who had served for six years on board the *Cospatrick*.

Further, the vessel was supplied with a fixed fire-engine on the forecastle-head, with a considerable quantity of hose, and all other appliances for extinguishing fire, if such should unfortunately break out. But, as we shall see, all these orderly arrangements, and careful provisions, and valuable appliances, proved inadequate to prevent a sudden and terrible disaster. The chain seems complete ; yet, evidently, a link was wanting somewhere, though what that link *was* it is impossible for us to conjecture.

The *Cospatrick* proceeded on her voyage with every sign of prosperity. No incident of the slightest importance disturbed the tranquil daily course. On Tuesday, the 17th of November, the wind was blowing from the north-west, but with such light breezes that the ship made hardly any way. At a quarter before midnight, Henry Macdonald, the second mate, went carefully round the upper deck, examining both the poop and forecastle. He then retired below. But soon after midnight he was aroused by that awful cry—always terrible, but never more so than on board ship!—the cry of "Fire!" He sprang from his berth, and rushed on deck undressed. At the cuddy door he met Captain Elmslie, his commander, who ordered him to go forward at once, and inquire into the cause of the alarm. He hastened to do so, and found a dense black smoke pouring up the forecastle in immense clouds. The chief officer was busily engaged in getting the fire-engine to work ; and the alarm having spread throughout the ship, all the passengers and crew were rushing on deck panic-stricken. The report was, that the fire proceeded from the boatswain's locker.

Captain Elmslie had made his appearance, and, assisted by the second mate, endeavoured to get the ship's head before

the wind, to prevent the flames from being beaten back over the vessel. But she did not answer her helm readily, and the flames with fatal rapidity rushing up the fore-castle, the fore-sail was hauled in. By this time all was confusion on board, and the captain appears to have lost command over both crew and passengers. In the tumult of voices and the hurrying to and fro, the shrieks of women and the shouts of bewildered, struggling men, he hesitated what to do; and every moment lost brought hopeless destruction nearer. The hose of the fire-engine had been got to work, and fire-buckets were passed from hand to hand, with the effect of deluging the fore-part of the ship with water. But these efforts were useless; the fire gained rapidly; the flames ran like fiery serpents up every rope and spar; and the ship was enveloped in a thick white smoke as in a shroud.

And now the doomed vessel came head up to wind, so that the smoke drove aft in suffocating clouds, preventing all attempts to discover the exact locality of the fire. The second mate asked Captain Elmslie if he should lower the boats. Unfortunately the captain replied in the negative, and desired him to do more, if he could, to put the fire out. But by this time the flames were rushing up the main-hatchway, and had seized upon the foremost boats; while the space available for crew and passengers was growing more and more contracted. Further delay was impossible. The mate hurriedly sent men forward to clear the boats for putting to sea. The starboard-quarter boat was lowered at once; but no officer being on the spot, and no order being observed, a crowd of terrified emigrants, chiefly women, clambered into her, and the moment she touched the water she capsized, and all were drowned! To those struggling with the waves, hen-coops, timbers, and other movable articles were flung; but they were of no avail to save life.

BURNING OF THE "COSPATRICK."



Two men were now stationed at the port boat, with directions to prevent any one from lowering it except by the captain's orders; and the officers made a vigorous effort to get the long-boat lowered, but in the panic that prevailed no help was forthcoming. Her bows caught fire, and she was abandoned. Then the struggling, shouting mass made a rush for the port life-boat, which was lowered, and instantly filled by thirty or forty people. As this was the last chance for life, the mate, Macdonald, sprang into her, just before she was pushed clear of the ship. The chief mate and a female also jumped overboard, and were picked up; but no one thought of putting into the boat a supply of food, or even a keg of fresh water.

It was now that the main-mast fell, crushing in its fall many luckless wretches; and, soon afterwards, the expansive force of the flames and smoke blew out the stern, and the mizzen-mast fell. When day dawned, the starboard life-boat was found full of people; and Macdonald, the second mate, pulling alongside of her, went on board, and took charge. There were then two boats afloat—the port and starboard life-boats; but in neither was any supply of provisions or water, and their fittings had been so grossly neglected that the starboard life-boat had only one sound oar and part of a broken one! There was neither mast nor sail.

All day, and until late in the afternoon of the 19th, the two boats—one containing thirty-nine and the other forty-two people—hovered around the burning ship, which had by that time become a ship of death,—a charred, blackened, smoking hulk. It sank at last, carrying with it the few poor creatures who had not been killed by suffocation or by jumping overboard. The captain was seen to throw his wife into the waves to give her a last chance of life, before he himself sprang from the burning wreck; but neither was saved. But

it is useless to recall the harrowing scenes by which such a catastrophe was necessarily attended. After the ship had disappeared, and all was silence, the two boats kept to the north-east, in the hope of reaching the Cape of Good Hope. They remained together until the 21st of November, when, a strong wind blowing, they were separated. The port life-boat, under the command of the chief mate, with forty-two persons on board, has never since been heard of; and we are left, therefore, to trace the fortunes of the starboard life-boat, which, as we have seen, was in charge of the second mate, Macdonald.

The wind was southerly; and to take advantage of it, Macdonald rigged up a sail with a girl's petticoat, and one of the footlings. His boat contained the baker, the emigrants' cook, three able-bodied seamen, ten seamen, and twenty-three passengers—in all, including the mate, thirty-nine people. As they had not a drop of fresh water, nor a crust of bread, to alleviate the pangs of thirst and hunger, they rapidly exhibited signs of severe suffering; some going mad, through drinking sea-water. So rapid was the work of destruction, that on the morning of the 25th they were reduced to eight in number; and of these, three were out of their mind. Hopes of salvation were awakened in the breasts of the survivors by the appearance of a sail before daylight on the 26th; but their feeble cries were unheard, and their boat, lying in the trough of the waves, passed unseen. Three more perished, and the others were kept alive only by the desperate resource of feeding on the bodies of the dead. These too must have gone, and the story of the *Cospatrick's* melancholy fate would, in that case, never have been known, had they not been discovered by the ship *British Sceptre*, of Liverpool, on the 27th. They were immediately taken on board, where they received every attention, and the most kindly and careful treatment. Two,

however—Robert Hamilton, an able-bodied seaman, and a passenger, name unknown—died before the ship reached St. Helena ; so that out of four hundred and seventy-three, seamen and passengers, who had sailed from England in the *Cospatrick*, only three survived and returned to Plymouth in the *British Sceptre*—namely, Henry Macdonald, second mate ; Thomas Lewis and Edward Cutler, ordinary seamen.

The foregoing details are gathered from the formal depositions of the survivors ; but additional particulars, illustrative of the terrible nature of their sufferings, were furnished to the leading London papers.

In Macdonald's opinion, the fire broke out, from some accidental cause, in the boatswain's locker, where, as we have seen, were stowed many inflammable articles—such as oil, varnish, and oakum. It appears, on breaking through the thin partitions of the locker, to have run along between decks ; and in a very short time it gained a strong hold upon the vessel. No order or discipline was preserved ; and in the panic that ensued it was impossible to take efficient measures for extinguishing the flames. The difficulties were increased by the ill-behaviour of the ship, which would not answer readily to her helm. In about an hour and a half from the discovery of the fire, the safety of the *Cospatrick* was beyond all human effort. The captain, however, had occupied all hands in the endeavour, and thus, unfortunately, the time was wasted which might otherwise have been utilized in properly storing, provisioning, and lowering the boats, or in making a raft. The result was, that the two boats in the fore part of the ship were speedily destroyed, while the flames so enshrouded and enveloped the long-boat that the attempt to disentangle her had to be given up.

The starboard life-boat was suddenly crowded to such an

extent that on being lowered it overturned, as already related ; and several times, on drowning persons trying to climb into it, it again capsized. The port life-boat was safely launched, with forty-two occupants. These included Macdonald, who, at the outset of the voyage, had been appointed her coxswain. Subsequently the starboard boat was got out, the man Lewis being the first on board of her ; and as she drifted towards the main-mast, which had fallen overboard, and to which clung numbers of men and women, about thirty-two people, of whom eight or nine were females, struggled into this apparent ark of safety. One of the women was a young Irish girl, named Mary Shea, who afterwards handed her petticoat to the mate in the port boat to serve as a sail. The officer detailed to the starboard boat was Mr. Romaine, the chief mate ; but for some reason he wished to command the port boat, and Macdonald accordingly left the latter, and, with his boots and clothes on, swam to the other. Then he found, to his bitter disappointment, that the keg of water which ought to have been in the boat, had, in the process of cleaning her a day or two before, been forgotten to be replaced.

According to Macdonald, after he got into the boat, he saw no more of the captain, nor did he know how he perished ; but Lewis, who was in his boat, told him that he saw Captain Elmslie throw his wife overboard, and jump into the sea himself. He said that he also saw the doctor, with the captain's son in his arms, plunge into the sea. These incidents occurred when the power of the flames and the increased volume of the smoke rendered further delay on board the ship almost impossible ; though she floated for some hours longer. As she constituted a burning beacon, which could not fail to attract the attention of any passing vessel, the two boats remained by her as long as she kept above

water. As we have seen, the fire broke out about one on the morning of the 18th, and it was four o'clock in the afternoon of the 19th when the *Cospatrick* sank. Until the last, or nearly the last, cries for help came from the doomed vessel, though the forms of the sufferers could not be distinguished. The help so piteously asked for could not be given.

The condition of the people in the boats was signally wretched. They had scarcely any clothes on; they were unnerved by the suddenness and awfulness of the calamity; and they had no means of sustenance. Overcome, body and soul, they scarcely spoke after the two boats had separated, and when they did, it was in the accents and with the wildness of delirium. They made no complaints, but sank silently, one by one. Throughout his sad experience, Macdonald kept a kind of diary, the writing in which showed very plainly how his strength was gradually leaving him. These are the entries, brief and simple, yet how significant of awful, almost incredible suffering:—

“*Wednesday morning, 19th November, one o'clock.*—A fire; took boats; at noon fell in with second boat; all night laid to with a drag.

“*19th.*—Pulled up with the ship, she still burning; about four P.M. she sank; all the time both boats kept by the ship. Nothing to eat since we left the ship.

“*Friday, 20th.*—Fine weather; nothing in sight; men commenced to ask for water. At nine o'clock lost sight of the other boat.

“*Sunday.*—Very dull; heavy sea on; three men died.

“*Monday, 22nd.*—Strong gale, with a heavy sea running; five deaths; cut a couple for the blood and liver.

“*Tuesday, 24th.*—Strong gale; four men died.

" *Wednesday*.—Light breeze ; more died ; reduced to eight men, three of them mad."

On Thursday, Macdonald was too ill to write ; and it will be observed that in these entries the date is not always correctly given.

On board Macdonald's boat the watch was kept by Macdonald himself, alternately with Cutler, Lewis, and M'Neal. Macdonald was in every sense the commander of the boat, and showed an extraordinary amount of energy, resolution, and endurance. No one gave any trouble, except an unfortunate emigrant, who, in an access of delirium, endeavoured to bite Macdonald through the heel of his boot.

From the second mate's narrative, as taken down by a newspaper reporter, we take the following extract :—

"The two boats kept company the 20th and 21st, when it commenced to blow, and we got separated during the night. I whistled and shouted, but when daylight came we could see nothing of the other boat. Thirst began to tell severely on all of us. A man named Bentley fell overboard while steering the boat, and was drowned. Three men became mad that day, and died. We then threw bodies overboard. On the 23rd the wind was blowing hard, and a high sea running. We were continually bailing the water out. We rigged a sea-anchor and hove the boat to ; but it was only tied with strands to the boat's painter, and we lost it. Four men died ; and we were so hungry and thirsty that we drank the blood and ate the livers of two of them. We lost our only oar then. On the 24th there was a strong gale, and we rigged another sea-anchor, tying it with anything we could get. There were six more deaths that day. She shipped water till she was nearly full. On the 25th there was a light breeze, and it was awful hot. We were reduced that day to eight, and three of them out of their minds. We all felt very bad

that day. Early on the morning of the 26th, not being daylight, a boat passed close to us running. We hailed, but got no answer. She was not more than fifty yards off. She was a foreigner. I think she must have heard us. One more died that day. We kept on sucking the blood of those that died. The 27th was squally all round, but we never caught a drop of water, although we tried to do it. Two more died that day. We threw one overboard, but were too weak to lift the other. There were then five left—two able seamen, one ordinary, myself, and one passenger. The passenger was out of his mind. All had drunk sea-water. We were all dozing, when the madman bit my foot, and I woke up. We then saw a ship bearing down upon us. She proved to be the *British Sceptre*, from Calcutta to Dundee. We were taken on board, and were treated very kindly. I got very bad on board of her. I was very nigh at death's door. We were not recovered when we got to St. Helena. I had dysentery. They handed us brandy, and we were in such a state that we should have drunk all of it. We made five hundred and forty miles in those eight days. The latitude where it [the disaster] occurred was 37° 15' S. lat., 12° 25' E. long. This was at mid-day on the 17th. I knew that we had kept in near the same longitude all the time. We knew we were to the northward of the Cape. My opinion is, that the first boat never recovered the wind of that night. The woman in that boat was frantic; she leaped more than once. It was heart-rending to see the women when the first boat went down. They were about eighty in number. The ship's davits bent down with the weight of them. They went down with one shriek."

The reporter, in his account of his interview with the survivors, describes the story told by Lewis and Cutler as almost identical with that of the second mate's.

Lewis, "a grim old Welshman," of a sea-worn aspect, and

evidently saddened by the recollection of what he had seen and endured, observed that for the first four or five days he was in the boat he felt neither hungry nor thirsty, but afterwards his sufferings were severe. The passengers, he said, seemed at first rather light-hearted and cheerful than otherwise. "They would soon," they said, "be at the Cape, and have a glass of wine!" But their hearts sank on their separation from the other boat, the passengers of which and themselves had maintained a constant interchange of cheering words. Delirium came on, and then the awful shadow of death. One, who had always boasted of the extraordinary keenness of his eyesight, exclaimed,—and with so much confidence that Cutler almost believed him,—“I can see a pleasure walk on the beach; I can see a white house on the beach; the sign of a public-house, ‘the Lamb’;” and he was urgent with Macdonald to steer the boat in that direction.

“We soon got to know who was to be the next to die!” remarked Cutler. They became delirious or torpid, but mostly passed away in their sleep. Four or five would lie down huddled together, and when in a few hours the inert mass moved again, it would be found that one, at least, would wake no more.

The captain of the *British Sceptre* gives the following account of his falling in with the boat:—

Having passed a quantity of driftwood in the morning, I imagined at first it was another piece of the same sort; but further examination convinced me that it was something of a wreck. I kept the ship towards it, and when near at hand hove the ship aback, when a squall came on, and we drifted past; not, however, without seeing that it was a boat with human beings in it, and that they had no oars with which to manage it. A piece of board was erected as a mast, with a cross-piece nailed to it, on which was extended a rag as a sail.

I motioned to them to run the boat before the wind to our lee-quarter, which they did. Having shortened a deal of canvas, I threw the ship flat aback, and backed right up to the boat; a successful manœuvre, which soon brought her alongside. The sight was something horrible. There were five men in her alive, and one dead body. One man was stripped naked up to his waist, his feet swollen, full of sores, himself raving mad. The coloured man barely alive, but still in his senses. They were soon passed on deck, and every kindness and attention shown them. Warm-water baths, weak brandy and water, nourishing food, with medicines adapted to their symptoms, was the treatment adopted.

Notwithstanding all these cares, the passenger and the coloured man survived only a day or two.

Here we may close our narrative ; no additional details are needed to intensify the gloom of the terrible picture, and there are none which can in any way relieve it.

LVII.

FOUNDERING OF THE "LA PLATA."

November 29, 1874.



THE *La Plata* was a stoutly built ship of 969 tons, which left Gravesend on the 26th of November 1874, with three hundred miles of telegraph cable on board, intended to renew a portion of the submarine cable from Lisbon to Brazil.

The story of her voyage may be summed up in a few words.

On the 29th she encountered, in the Bay of Biscay, a tremendous gale. Being heavily overloaded, she lay deep in the water, which, during the prevalence of the storm, broke over her in mighty billows, putting out her fires, and thus rendering the engines unavailable, and, finally, swamping the ship, which suddenly parted asunder, with a noise like the roar of a thousand cannon, and went down immediately, with her captain and sixty seamen and passengers still on board. Three boats had been launched, but, partly owing to the suddenness of the catastrophe, only one got away, with twelve hands on board, but no food, except a Dutch cheese, and no drink, except a bottle of gin.

The boat picked up three men still alive; and after twenty-three hours passed on the wild and rolling sea, in an agony of

thirst which made several of them delirious, the fifteen were rescued by the *Gareloch*, an emigrant vessel, and afterwards transferred to the *Antenor*, a vessel belonging to the Ocean Steamship Company, which conveyed them back to England in safety.

It was at first supposed that the fifteen men thus happily rescued were the only survivors of the crew and passengers of the *La Plata*; but on Christmas-day a leading London journal published a remarkable narrative, by which it appeared that two more had been added to the number. Their true story is one of the most wonderful records of "peril at sea" and ultimate safety to be found in the entire annals of maritime adventures.

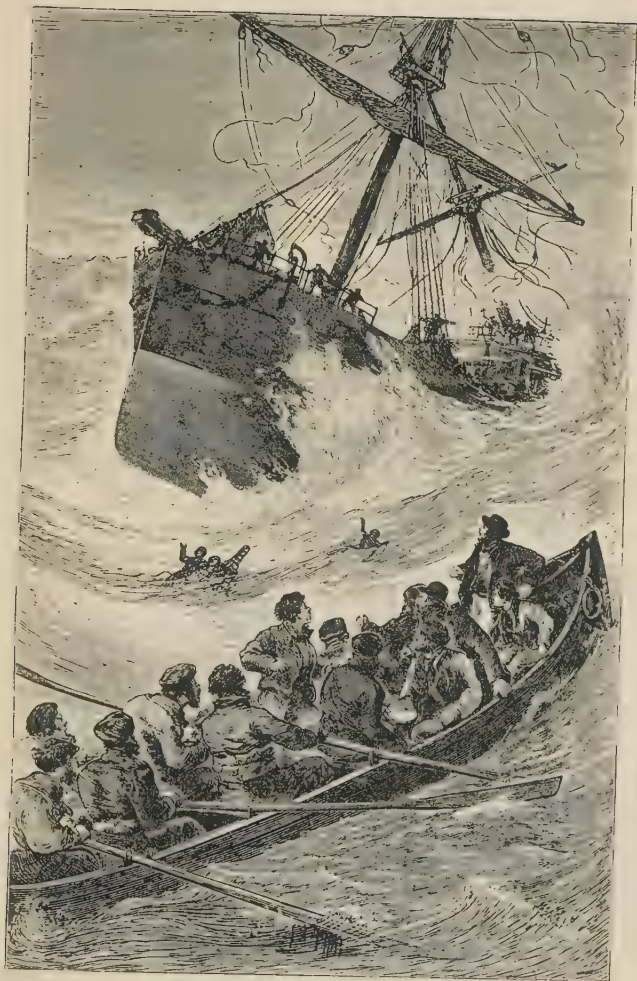
The two men were Henry Lamont, the boatswain, and John Hooper, a quartermaster, of the *La Plata*. They escaped with their lives, but they brought their lives only out of the clutches of the cruel sea. When saved, they were racked with rheumatic tortures, and seemed like men who, in the prime of manhood, had suddenly been afflicted with the decrepitude of old age.

The *La Plata* foundered on the morning of Sunday, the 29th of November. When the fires had been extinguished, and the water, rising rapidly in the hold, extinguished all hope as well, two of the life-boats on deck were manned, with a vague idea that when the ship sank they, at least, would be left floating. But just as the *La Plata* was settling down, a billow broke against the boat in which Lamont and Hooper, with others, were sitting, and carried the men into the sea. The escape of Hooper at this conjuncture was truly marvellous. Of course, as the crushed and wave-beaten boat gave way, he fell into the sea, and was carried down by the suction of the sinking ship. When he came up again he got entangled

in some of the rigging, and was dragged down a second time. He contrived, however, to extricate himself from the rigging, and once more rose to the surface; only to receive so heavy a blow on the head from a floating spar that it nearly killed him. This man, we must explain, had been on the sick list before the foundering of the vessel, but had gallantly persisted in steering the *La Plata*, till the mate told him it was useless to cling to his post any longer, and that the time had come when every man must look to himself. At last, on looking about him, he saw a damaged air-raft tossing to and fro; and upon this he and Lamont, who had undergone a very similar experience, contrived to seat themselves. It was made of compartments filled with air, and joined together by a canvas band, which formed a kind of seat. Perched upon this band, they were in a kind of trough, with the water up to their waists.

Necessarily, their lower limbs grew gradually benumbed; and as they were without food, their sole chance of escaping a lingering death lay in their being sighted by some passing ship; a small chance indeed, for to any ship not passing quite close they would have seemed a mere tiny speck on the water, or, rather, would have been invisible except when on the crest of a wave, and with the help of a telescope. Then the sea was continually washing over them; so that, had they not been men of strong frames and abundant vitality, they would scarcely have lived through the three days until their final rescue.

During the Sunday, the first day of their suffering, their wistful gaze could discover only one passing ship, which was much too far off to see them. On Monday the breeze was strong, and the sea rolling in great waves, but the weather was fine. Several ships swept by in the blue distance. These they could plainly see, but by none of them could they hope



FOUNDERING OF THE "LA PLATA"

to be seen. Tuesday, for many hours, was delightfully calm; and their hopes were raised by the appearance of a three-masted schooner, which bore down within half a mile of them. They shouted with all their might; but it is to be supposed they were not heard, for the schooner passed on, and soon disappeared beneath the blue rim of the horizon. Towards evening the breeze freshened, and it continued to blow hard during the night. The men were worn and weary; and in the conflict between physical fatigue and the desire for life they sank into a condition between waking and sleeping—dozing for a minute or two, and then suddenly waking up to a consciousness of their miserable situation. About four o'clock on Wednesday morning, one of them saw through the gray mist the outline of a dark object bearing down upon them, and immediately roused his companion. They soon perceived that it was a vessel rapidly approaching, and when she was within a hundred yards of them, they rallied their remaining energies, and uttered one loud cry for help. To their indescribable joy, a bright light, shining through the gloom, after a few seconds' interval, told them that their cry had been heard and was answered. For two hours the light burned before them like a beacon-star, but just before daybreak it disappeared; and when morning rose over the wintry waters, it was nowhere to be seen. The two castaways underwent a painful revulsion of feeling, and were fast sinking in despair, when, about two hours after daylight, the missing ship bore down towards them. She proved to be the Dutch schooner *Wilhelm Benklezoon*. Her master, on hearing the cry of distress, had immediately brought his ship to, and with generous pity resolved to keep by the spot until morning. But, meantime, the shipwrecked men and their air-raft had drifted to leeward. At daybreak they were out of sight; but the Dutch captain conjectured, from the force and direc-

tion of the wind, the point to which any boat or floating wreck would naturally drift, and made sail in that direction. The accuracy of his judgment was proved, and his humanity rewarded by the result, for he overtook the raft.

But here the castaways, when safety seemed within their reach, experienced the greatest danger. The wind blew so violently, and the sea ran so high, that the captain could not venture to lower a boat, nor could he bring his little schooner alongside the raft. In the former case, he would run the risk of sacrificing his own men without rescuing the others ; and in the latter, he would swamp the raft. He therefore made signs to the two men to abandon the raft, and swim to the vessel. The sufferings of the last three days had so reduced their powers, that they doubted whether it was possible for them to embrace what, nevertheless, was their sole hope of safety. Lamont, the boatswain, was the first to make the attempt, and he succeeded in getting alongside. As he was too weak to hold on by a rope while being hauled on board, he took a turn of the rope round his wrist. Meanwhile, the raft had again drifted to leeward, and the schooner made another tack to give Hooper a chance. Less robust than Lamont, he was more exhausted ; but as he felt that it was no worse to drown between the raft and the schooner than to perish on the raft, he made the effort, and struck out for the ship and life. When he got alongside, his hands were too benumbed even to grasp the rope held out to him, and he seized it with his teeth. The little schooner lay low in the water, and some of the crew, leaning over, and watching their opportunity, caught him by his half-frozen hand, and drew him on board. Neither he nor Lamont was able to stand without support. In truth, that they were alive at all seems wonderful, when we remember that from Saturday evening until Wednesday noon they had eaten nothing, and that for many

hours they had been drifting, up to their waist in water, at the mercy of wind and wave, under a cold November sky. On board the schooner, however, they received the kindest and most careful treatment, so that before their arrival at Gibraltar they had recovered from the worst effects of their sad experience.

From Gibraltar they proceeded to Southampton by the Peninsular and Oriental Company's steamer *Cathay*. Here they were "interviewed" by the special correspondent of the *Daily News*, from whose narrative we borrow a few additional particulars.

Lamont informed him that on the raft they clung together for the sake of warmth, and that all their vague waking dreams and visions were connected with food in some shape or other. They did not feel either hungry or thirsty,—their immersion in the water probably maintaining the proper moisture of the body; and they derived some relief from alternately chewing at a medal which Lamont had received from the Shipwrecked Mariners' Society. It was a silver medal, the edges all bitten, jagged, and indented with tooth-marks, with an effigy of Nelson on one side, and his immortal Trafalgar watchword, "England expects every man to do his duty." It seems the two men talked but little while on the raft, and only about their friends, or to cheer each other, and pray aloud. Sometimes Lamont would fall into a fit of despondency, when Hooper, in his simple, manly way, would whisper that God would never have kept them up so long to let them drown at last. They were true heroes, these calm, grave, undemonstrative English seamen, and fully worthy of the race whose history from the days of Drake downwards has been one long brilliant record of courage, endurance, and self-sacrifice. They would say to each other, cheerfully, "Well, if you are saved and I die, you will go and see my

friends, will you not? Or I will do the same by you." And they gave each other the addresses of their friends.

The appearance of an American vessel almost within hail, but which does not seem to have descried the ocean-waif, was very bitter to them. They could see everything that was being done on board,—the cook going into the galley, the movements of the steersman as he put the wheel up and down, and the seamen setting the square fore-sail. Unable to stand up, they hoisted a coat on a piece of broken board, and shouted until their throats were hoarse; but all in vain. As the breeze freshened, she bore away, and left them alone on the waters. Even then Hooper would not give up all hope. "We're drifting away," he said to his comrade, "towards the Bay of Biscay, and getting into the track of ships." And, to use their own forcible expression, they took to praying "very heavy." Yes, "we prayed aloud, time about. I reckon," said Lamont, "it was a little wild at times, this praying; but we always knew what we were about." Their prayers were answered, and God rescued them from the jaws of Ocean.

Having thus sketched the leading features of the loss of the *La Plata*, and told the wonderful story of the escape of two of her men, we may retrace our steps a little, and describe more minutely the special incidents of this extraordinary shipwreck.

The *La Plata*, then, left Gravesend for Rio Grande do Sul on Thursday morning, November 26th, with three hundred miles of telegraph cable on board, and apparatus for picking up and "splicing" the cable which had been previously lost by the *Gomez*. She was a ship of 965 tons register, with engines of 120 horse-power; had been much employed in laying cables; was commanded by Captain Dudden, a steady and experi-

enced seaman ; and had on board a surgeon, 3 officers, 4 quartermasters, 4 engineers, 7 stewards, 3 cooks, 2 boat-swains, 1 carpenter, 11 stokers, 26 able-bodied seamen, and 1 lamplighter, besides the professional staff—Mr. Ricketts, in charge of the cable and apparatus, 6 electricians, and 10 cable-laying hands.

She carried five boats and two patent rafts ; with 260 tons of coal, and 700 tons of other material.

On Friday morning, when she was off the Isle of Wight, her pilot left, and she proceeded down Channel, the wind blowing freshly, and the ship steaming about four knots. The wind continued to increase, until at midnight on Saturday it blew a gale. The *La Plata* appears to have been overloaded, and to have lain very low in the water. She shipped a heavy sea, which carried away one of the crew, and swept overboard the port jolly-boat. Soon afterwards, another billow broke over her, and she lost one of the starboard boats.

Still the gale increased in fury, and the ship strained and laboured so much that, on Sunday morning, between eight and nine, the engineer had to report that she was making a great quantity of water. The captain, after consulting with his officers, ordered a portion of the cable to be thrown overboard, so as to lighten the vessel ; but she still rolled heavily in the trough of the sea, and though the pumps were kept going, the leak rapidly increased. At length, the rising water put out the engine-fires ; and the second mate ordered the maintop, foretop, and fore sail to be set, and the ship put before the wind. Unfortunately, she was now unmanageable, and she lay like a log on the water ; the waves breaking over her, and buffeting her to and fro as if she had been a straw. Captain Dudden preserved his presence of mind, and the orders given with coolness were obeyed with promptitude. But nothing could be done. The *La Plata* had ceased to

answer her helm, and, broken down by the heavy apparatus she was carrying, let in the water, as it were, *at every pore*. It filled the aft cabin, swamped the hold, tore away the engine-fittings, and rushed in with a force and rapidity that no human efforts could control. It became evident that the ship was sinking by the stern. With pieces of wood obtained by breaking up packing-cases, and waste cotton soaked in paraffin oil, a fire was lighted in the donkey-engine, and Gray, the engineer, stood resolutely to his post. But the word soon went round that all was over, and each man at liberty to do the best he could for self-preservation. An effort was made to lower the boats and rafts; but at half-past twelve the ship foundered, stern first, with sixty persons on board, the captain and surgeon, who had vainly tried to get the rafts clear, standing on the bridge, and going down to their doom in heroic silence.

The only boat that got off was the port-quarter boat, with twelve men in her; and three others were afterwards picked up, making fifteen in all. A boat on the port side was stove in by the violence of the waves. Of the remaining two, one was capsized when the ship sank, and the three persons picked up were thrown out of her.

The boat that escaped was two hours or more getting clear of the wreck. There was nothing on board of her but a bottle of gin and a small piece of cheese. A fearful sea was running; the boat leaked; and the chance seemed small that the fifteen persons she carried would save their lives after all. However, the oars were got out, and a vigorous effort kept the boat from being drawn into the vortex of the foundering vessel. The surrounding scene was one of the most melancholy character. Numbers of men might be seen struggling desperately for life, rising and falling as the waves rose and fell, and crying piteously for the help that could not be

given. By this time the wreck had sunk so deeply that only her masts and sails, and the top of her funnel, were visible. Some of the men succeeded in reaching the masts, to which they clung as to the last hope of safety. Those in the boat endeavoured to save all who came near them. One poor fellow, named Mackenzie, cried out to her coxswain, "In the name of God, save me!" The boat was then drawing towards the steamer, and to prevent her being capsized, it was necessary to edge her off again. Mackenzie swam close to the boat, and got his hand on the gunwale. Again he implored assistance; and the coxswain replied, "I cannot look after you this moment, but I will directly." He kept his word: as soon as the boat was clear, he stooped, seized his jacket with his teeth, and dragged him on board. Then a boy came up wearing a life-belt, and another youth, nearly exhausted; both were saved, making, with Mackenzie, the three to whom we have already alluded.

They were now fifteen in all; the boat was dangerously overloaded; and it was with the greatest difficulty they succeeded in getting away from the wreck. The funnel had disappeared; only the masts and sails could be seen, and over these the sea broke furiously. Then came a sudden explosion, like the simultaneous discharge of a thousand cannon. Masts, yards, and sails, with the poor wretches clinging to them, were hurled into the air; while the waters all around were strewn with shattered timbers. This was the end of all; the life-struggle was at an end; every voice was silenced, and nothing could be heard but the rush of the leaping billows and the roar of the keen November wind.

The crew of the boat now directed their efforts to keep their crazy craft afloat. About four o'clock on the Sunday afternoon they sighted a steamer apparently only two miles off. It was blowing very hard then, and she was under sail

as well as steam. They shouted with all their might, and at first thought she was making towards them; but she steamed away, and they began to despair. However, they laboured away at the oars. Night came down on the sea; a terrible night! They had no provisions, and the boat made so much water that they expected every moment she would be swamped. Two or three men were kept constantly at work to bail her; while everybody was soaked and chilled with the waves and the spray. About midnight the wind changed to the north-west, blowing a terrible squall, and bringing with it a storm of rain. Though it froze their life-blood, the rain was welcome, for it quenched their thirst. They lay in the boat with their mouths open, and caught what they could. As night wore away, some of the crew became delirious, and apparently slept. The boy who had been rescued woke from his sleep, exclaiming, "What a long walk I have had; I have come from Belvedere,* and want to walk home to Woolwich;" and the poor little fellow, in his delirious fancy, would have stepped out of the boat, had not a kind hand restrained him.

Great was the joy of the survivors when, at daybreak on Monday morning, they saw the tall masts of a ship about eight or ten miles distant. They did all they could to attract her attention, but it was nearly ten o'clock before they were discovered. When they saw that her sails were set so as to bear down upon them, their hearts throbbed with uncontrollable emotion; and about a quarter past eleven she was so close that they no longer entertained any doubt of their safety. In about fifteen minutes more they were all on board the *Gareloch*, a Glasgow ship, commanded by Captain Greenwood. The attentions they received from the captain, his wife, and all the crew, were as kind as they were judicious.

* A village in Kent, between Woolwich and Erith.

They were provided with warm clothing, and supplied with small portions of brandy and soup, as they could bear them. But the *Gareloch* was outward-bound; and, therefore, when the steamer *Antenor*, for London, came alongside, it was deemed advisable to tranship them,—all but the poor boy, who was in a state of such nervous prostration that he could not be removed.


On board the *Antenor* the treatment they experienced was neither so thoughtful nor so generous as that of which they had been the objects on board the *Gareloch*; but it was enough for them that they were carried in safety to Gravesend.

Thus, of the seventy-five souls on board the *La Plata* when she sailed on her brief and disastrous voyage, only seventeen were saved. The loss of fifty-eight lives and a good ship is to be attributed, we fear, to the culpable manner in which she had been overloaded; and we congratulate the reader that the legislature has recently enacted such measures of restriction as will render this fertile cause of disaster at sea henceforth impossible, or, at all events, a matter for signal punishment.

LVIII.

WRECK OF THE "SCHILLER."

May 7, 1875.

 MORE haste, worse speed," is a proverb which holds good at sea as well as on land ; and it cannot be doubted that of late years many good ships, with their freight of precious lives, have been lost, because their captains have endeavoured to comply with the prevalent demand for "quick passages." To this cause, quite as much as to the dense fog which prevailed at the time, must be ascribed the wreck of the *Schiller*, which occasioned so profound a sensation in the spring of 1875. A loss of three hundred lives was primarily due to the unwillingness of her captain to prolong his voyage by only a few hours. Yet no special blame, perhaps, ought to be thrown on his memory, for he was unquestionably thinking of the interests of his owners ; and as the old sea-adage, "the more days the more dollars," applies with peculiar force to a fully-manned passenger-laden Transatlantic steamer, it is notorious that owners do not regard with favour those captains who lengthen their passages by what they are apt to consider unnecessary caution. Are the owners, then, the persons in fault? Not entirely; they depend on the patronage of the public for interest on their

capital, and in these days of competition, pleasure, and feverish excitement, ships which are reputed to make slow voyages soon find their cargoes reduced and their berths empty. Thus, then, the public stimulate the shipowners, and the shipowners their captains, to incur a dangerous risk and hazard in order to save a few hours; that a voyage, for instance, may be accomplished in ten days and three-quarters instead of eleven.

It is true that the captain of the *Schiller*, at the time the accident occurred which brought about its destruction, was going half-speed, and therefore, to some extent, exercising a much-needed caution. He was not steaming ahead with an *entire* disregard of the lives of those in his charge; but when it is remembered that a dense fog surrounded the ship, which had prevented him for some time from taking proper observations,—that the wind was blowing strongly from south-west,—that it was flood-tide,—and that wind and tide, independent of steam, were rapidly carrying the *Schiller* in the direction of one of the most dangerous groups of islets within the British seas, we cannot but consider it unfortunate that the captain did not earlier decide on the prudent course which he finally adopted on the night of the 7th of May. It was half-past nine before he ordered the engines to be slowed, and the vessel's course altered from east by south to south-south-west, with the view of taking her, as he hoped, safely out into the open Channel, and far away from the terrible Scilly Isles,—the shores of which have been strewn with “the bones” of so many goodly ships! But it was too late; the *Schiller* was already among the rocks; in less than half an hour she struck; and when the murky dawn broke on the swelling seas, only a “poor remnant” of her great company of men, women, and children—a few hours before so full of buoyant life—remained to tell the tale of sorrow, suffering, and death.

The tale is one which has been told so often in these pages that we need but repeat the leading particulars, so far as they belonged to this present case.

The *Schiller* was an iron steam-vessel, built at Glasgow in 1873. She was of 3600 tons register, was rigged as a brig, and belonged to the "Eagle Company" of Hamburg, between which port and New York she regularly plied. She left New York on the 27th of April, having on board a crew of 120, 264 passengers, and a general cargo. Her run across the Atlantic was made with a fair wind and in favourable weather, until about the 4th of May, when a thick haze came on, with driving storms of rain, preventing the captain from taking those observations which would have revealed his exact position. On the evening of the 7th, the haze deepened into a fog. From the number of miles he had made, the captain knew he must now be drawing near a very perilous coast. He slowed his engines, therefore, to half-speed; and, as we have already said, altered his course with the view of bearing up into mid-channel. But these precautions were taken too late; and in half an hour the *Schiller* drove full on the Retarrier Ledge, near the Bishop Rock Lighthouse.

It was soon found that no human effort could dislodge her; and the captain and officers addressed themselves to the task of saving life. Rockets were fired, and guns discharged at frequent intervals; but, unfortunately, it is the habit of ships passing up Channel to make these signals as a ready means of announcing their arrival in British waters. In clear weather the news is then telegraphed from the Scilly Islands to the nearest ports, and thence to London. Efforts were made to lower the boats; but two were smashed by the fall of the funnel, and the others were carried away by the violence of the billows, which shook the *Schiller* from stem to stern. The usual scenes of distress, meantime, were passing

on board. Mothers clasped their children, wives embraced their husbands. Some knelt in prayer; others showed a calm indifference to the horror of their position; others shed silent tears; not a few exhibited the wildest terror; and the bravest and readiest provided themselves with safety-belts or spars, so that when the ship went to pieces they might have a battle for life. This consummation, it became evident, could not be long delayed. Masts were shattered and planks torn by the crashing of the ship against the rocks, and the violent blows which the billows dealt against her sides. Ever and anon a swoop of waters rushed over the decks, and carried away a seaman or a passenger, for whom there was no help. The ruin of all seemed inevitable, when life-boats arrived from St. Mary's, and, at no small hazard to their gallant crews, got alongside, and after much difficulty and no little danger took off forty-one persons. These were chiefly women and children. Soon after the last boat had put off, laden to the gunwale, the ship broke up, and the sea was strewn with fragments of wreck, to which clung many a despairing swimmer. A few moments, and all was silent, except the roar of winds and waters! No fewer than 300 men, women, and children perished on this fatal night! Humanly speaking, they might have been saved by the exercise of a little more prudence. Had the *Schiller* lain-to until the fog cleared, her captain would have discovered her position, and steered her into safety.

For the next few days, pieces of timber, clothing, chests, and dead bodies were cast up on the shore of St. Mary's, the principal of the Scilly Islands. The dead were reverently treated. After they had been examined, to see if they afforded any marks or memorials by which their friends or relatives could be traced, they were placed in plain deal coffins, painted black, and preparations made for their interment.

When the graves were ready, a funeral procession was formed, embracing almost the whole population of Hugh Town, the capital of St. Mary's, and the coffins, thirty-seven in number, were mounted upon the singular little two-wheeled carts, and drawn by the shaggy little ponies peculiar to the district. Every coffin was strewn by kindly hands with fresh and fragrant flowers. The shops in the town were shut; nearly all the houses bore some sign of mourning; the ship and boats in the harbour carried their flags half-mast high. An interesting feature of the procession was furnished by a little group of Good Templars, who, wearing their characteristic insignia, followed the coffin of a Good Templar, whom they had never seen or known in life, and of whose connection with their fraternity they had become aware only through the discovery of one of their tokens on his body. A passenger, Herr Reidem, who had been saved while clinging to a spar, sadly toiled behind the coffins which enclosed the bodies of his wife and child. So they went slowly and silently along the rugged sea-side road for about a mile, until they reached the little stone-walled churchyard of St. Mary's, where the beautiful funeral service of the Church of England was read by the Rev. Mr. White, chaplain to Mr. Dorrien Smith, the "lord," or proprietor, of the Scilly Islands.

This churchyard of St. Mary's contains many sad tokens of the perils of the deep. Among others, the traveller recognizes the graves of Captain Londes of the line-of-battle ship *Association*, and many officers and seamen who perished with Sir Cloudesley Shovel in 1707. Their memorials will be found in the New Church, and they relate to one of the most melancholy disasters recorded in the chronicles of the Royal Navy.

Sir Cloudesley Shovel, a commander of high repute, was

returning with his fleet from an unsuccessful attempt upon Toulon, and on the 23rd of October, in tempestuous weather, arrived off Scilly, and sounded in ninety fathoms. In the evening, it is believed, he thought he saw the lights of Scilly, as he soon afterwards made signals of danger. His second in command, Sir George Byng, was only half a mile to windward of him, and could see the breakers dashing against the rocks known as the Bishop and his Clerks. The admiral's ship, the *Association*, driven by the fury of the gale on the Gilstone Rock, went to pieces in a few minutes, every soul on board being lost. The *Eagle* and the *Romney*—line-of-battle ships, the one of seventy and the other of fifty guns—also perished, and one man only was saved out of the crews of three vessels. He was thrown upon a ridge of rocks called the *Hellwethers*; and there he remained for some days before he could be rescued. The fire-ships *Phoenix* and *Firebrand* ran ashore: the *Royal Anne*, Sir George Byng's ship, passed the Trewewer Rock so closely that it carried away her quarter gallery. She was saved, however, by the great skill and exertions of her officers and men. The *St. George* had a miraculous escape. She and the *Association* struck the Gilstone at the same time; but the billow which broke over the one carried the other into deep water. Fully two thousand lives were lost on this melancholy occasion, which was more disastrous to the British navy than a great battle.

The Scilly Islands lie about thirty miles from the Land's End, and consist of about forty islands, of which six are inhabited, and numerous rocky islets, frequented only by the ocean-birds. The principal are—St. Mary's, with an area of about 1600 acres; Tresco, about 700; St. Martin's, 550; St. Agnes, 350; Bryher, 300; and Samson, 80.

A good view of the whole archipelago may be obtained

from Buzza Hill, an eminence in St. Mary's. Hugh Town lies at your feet ; you see around you a large portion of the island, apparently well-cultivated ; the bold promontory of Peninnis Head ; and the surrounding islands so situated as to enclose a kind of spacious lake or lagoon. From St. Agnes, on the left, to St. Martin's, on the right, the glance takes in all the largest of the group ; while in the distance lie hummocks of all dimensions, known as the "Off Islands." Stone and turf intermingle everywhere ; here green slopes, there formidable cliffs, with occasional glimpses of a narrow beach of white sand gleaming like silver in the sunlight. In the foreground is Tresco ; next appear Bryher and Samson ; and so round to St. Agnes again. "The sea, when swept by a strong breeze, rolls in magnificent waves through the numerous channels, leaping on the rocks, and breaking around the shores with a majesty of motion that imparts to the whole panorama an effect indescribable."

Mr. Walter White, in describing a visit to St. Mary's, enumerates some of its interesting features : Peninnis, the "Head of the Isles," a huge promontory of granite, built up in blocks like a mighty bastion, and protected by solid buttresses ; the rock-basins, connected by antiquaries with the sacrificial rites of the Druids, but evidently of natural origin ; the Pulpit Rock ; Tolmen Point, so named from its tolmen or perforated stone ; Blue Carn, the southernmost point of the island ; the Giant's Castle, a supposed Danish encampment on the edge of the cliff, with a triple wall and fosse ; Porth hellich, the "Cove of Willows" ; and the fatal rocks on which, says Mr. White, Sir Cloudesley Shovel was wrecked in 1707. The body of the admiral was picked up and buried on the shore of the cove ; but afterwards removed to Westminster Abbey. The strong current produced by the indraught of St. George's Channel, drifting the vessels out of

their course, was doubtless, he says, the cause of the catastrophe. Such is the strength of this current as to interfere with the regular action of the tides at the isles; with a twelve hours' flood there is but a four hours' ebb.

These desultory notes must conclude with an account of the Bishop Rock Lighthouse, which is situated about seven miles from Hugh Town, and thirty-two miles from the main land. A glance at a map will show the reader that St. Agnes is separated by a narrow channel called Smith's Sound from the uninhabited island of Annette. It is to the south of this mass of rock that we find the reef of the Hellwethers; and to the south-west of this Meledgan, and beyond Meledgan, Gorregan. To the west of Gorregan lie Rosevean and Rosevear, white with cataracts of foam and eddying, swirling waters; and south-west of these is the memorable Gilstone. To the north-west of Rosevear are situated Great and Little Crebawethan, where the *Douro* was lost, with all on board, in January 1843; and between Crebawethan and Rosevear the billows rage against Jacky's Rock, the scene of the wreck of the *Thames* steamer in 1841, when only four persons were saved out of sixty-five. Continuing our survey, we come to the Gunner, Nundeeys, and Crim Rocks,—all of which are haunted with memories of human suffering and sorrow; and, finally, we see to the westward of the disastrous chain the Bishop Rock, standing out like a sentinel to warn the seaman from approaching.

A lighthouse was erected here in 1858, from the design of Mr. James Walker. It is built of granite, and its vane rises to an elevation of 147 feet above high water. The foundations, consisting of four courses of masonry, were laid in a hollow excavated in the surface of the rock; and the first stone in the fifth course was laid on the 16th of July 1852.

The stone-work of the tower was carried up, season after season, until its completion on the 28th of August 1857; and the light—a fixed bright dioptric light of the first order, illuminating the surrounding seas, and visible, in clear weather, at a distance of fourteen miles—was exhibited on the 1st of September 1858.*

There is also a lighthouse on St. Agnes Island.

* “Distant thirty-two miles from the mainland, further than any other edifice of the kind, in a wild situation rarely blessed by calm, it is indeed a ‘Tadmor of the wave’ to cheer the mariner coming from the great ocean, and warn him of dangers.”—MR. WALTER WHITE, *A Londoner's Walk to the Land's End*.




SCENE OF THE WRECK OF THE "SCHILLER."

LIX.

LOSS OF THE "DEUTSCHLAND."

December 5, 1875.



It has been justly remarked by a contemporary writer that charges of inhumanity, or of slackness in giving aid in cases of shipwreck, grate harshly upon English ears. Yet if, with respect to the loss of the *Deutschland*, we may happily dismiss the former as unfounded, of the latter we fear those who left the unfortunate vessel to her fate for long and dreary hours can hardly be pronounced completely guiltless. The circumstances of the wreck were most unusual; and it is no wonder that at the time they created a considerable sensation, and elicited severe comments from foreign journals. An ocean-steamer, well-built and well-found, was lost on a well-known sandbank off the Essex coast; not through the fury of an irresistible storm, but owing to some strange error in her course. So far her captain and officers were responsible. But the ship did not go down suddenly, and the accident occurred at only a short distance from a large English seaport. In the persuasion that help was close at hand, all on board were calm and contented, and the passengers pursued their customary avocations. Night came. The tide began to rise, and as it rose the *Deutschland* sank deeper in the treacherous sands; the

foaming waves poured over its exposed decks, and carried away all who had feared to take shelter in the rigging, or who had loosened their grasp through cold and exhaustion ; a fourth of the crew, nearly half the passengers, lost their lives before the morning came. Yet Harwich was only twenty-four miles away, with steamers passing to and fro with little intermission. Lightships had descried the wreck in the morning, and communicated with one another and with the shore by signal. It happened, however, that Harwich had no life-boat, and without a life-boat the crew of the steam-tug refused to put to sea, as the night was stormy. Probably they would have been more daring had they known the exact position of the wreck, and the urgent peril of those on board ; but in any circumstances it is hard to acquit them of a timidity and a reluctance which we are fain to characterize as un-English. It is to be regretted, moreover, that the lightships had no means of communicating with the shore by submarine cable ; for had such been the case, the dangers of the *Deutschland* might have been made known to the Kentish seamen, and their life-boats would have reached the scene in time to save all on board : as it was, the life-boat from Broadstairs started as soon as the rumour of a wreck having occurred travelled to that picturesque little port. It was then, however, too late.

The North German steamer *Deutschland*, bound from Bremen for New York, with emigrants on board, was lost on the Kentish Knock during the night of December 5-6, 1875. Besides her crew, she carried one hundred and fifty passengers, and a heavy cargo. On approaching the Channel she encountered stormy weather, and at four o'clock on the morning of Sunday, the 5th, a strong gale was blowing ; and, as a measure of precaution, the speed of the ship was reduced

one half. The snow-drift preventing a good look-out, the lead was heaved every half-hour; but the exact position of the vessel does not seem to have been known, and the first intimation of danger which her captain recognized was the appearance of breakers through the veil of snow. He immediately ordered the engines to be reversed; but the propeller broke before the ship could answer, and the wind being right astern, she drifted on to the sandbank known as the Kentish Knock. The boats were cleared, and rockets fired; but as the night was dark, and the snow fell heavily, nothing could be done to save the crew and passengers until morning dawned. The water began to break over the decks, and some lives were lost. At dawn it was decided to get out the boats, into one of which the quartermaster and a couple of seamen were ordered; but as she was being lowered she capsized, and the three men were thrown into the sea. The boat righted, and they succeeded in clambering into her, but found that she had been carried away from the ship. No provisions were on board, and no oars. The boat drifted at the mercy of wind and wave. One of the men succumbed to cold, hunger, and fatigue in a few hours; another lingered until Monday evening. The boat, with one survivor, in a pitiful condition, was washed ashore at Garrison Point, near Sheerness, on Tuesday morning.

The other boats were stove in or swamped in the process of lowering; and nothing remained for the men, women, and children on board the *Deutschland* but to seek refuge in the rigging, from which many of them dropped into the sea as their strength gave way. Rockets were again sent up on Monday night; these were answered from the shore; and on Tuesday morning, twenty-eight hours after the *Deutschland* struck, the steam-tug *Liverpool* got alongside, and took off 136 of the surviving passengers and crew. When rescued

they were in a deplorable condition. The steam-tug then steered for Harwich, where she arrived about three o'clock in the afternoon, one child dying on the way.

The *Deutschland* was built in 1873 by Messrs. Caird & Co. of Greenock. She was a splendid steamer of 3000 tons, with engines of 700 horse-power ; and at the time of her loss she had on board a crew of 99, with 2 first-cabin passengers, 24 second, and 97 steerage.

Such is a brief outline of the catastrophe. We proceed to fill it up with details gathered from the narratives of survivors, the report of the inquest, and accounts which appeared in contemporary journals.

We have spoken of one seaman as being saved in the boat which drifted ashore near Sheerness. He was named August Bock ; and the statement he made, corrected by later information, runs as follows :—

A married man, with two children, he served as quartermaster on board the *Deutschland*. She was bound for New York, but was to call at Southampton. She was due there on the Saturday ; but her departure was delayed by the weather, and she did not leave Bremen until Saturday. On getting alongside of the fire-ship she cast anchor. At eight o'clock on Sunday morning anchor was weighed, and the *Deutschland* proceeded on her voyage, a regular gale blowing at the time.

“In the evening,” said Bock, “we struck, I think, a sand-bank ; it was near the Goodwin Sands. It had been snowing fast. We tried to get off, but could not. The sea washed us fore and aft during the night, and broke over us in all directions. The captain, when she went aground, got life-belts to every one of the passengers and crew ; and in the morning, thinking that the ship was going to break up, told us to lower the life-boat.”

Bock, with one of the crew and a passenger, got into the life-boat, and she was lowered ; but in lowering she capsized, and being attached only by a three-inch rope, which broke with the strain, she went adrift. She righted, however, and the three men clambered into her; but one of them was so severely injured in the capsizing, that he did not live above an hour. There were no oars on board, but Bock and his comrade hoisted the sail, and beat up in the direction in which they supposed the land to lie. Owing to the intense cold and the want of provisions, Bock's companion gradually fell into a state of stupor, and, in spite of all entreaties, refused to move or to exercise himself in any way which would keep up a free circulation of the blood. In the course of Monday afternoon he gradually sank into the bottom of the boat, and just before nightfall ceased to breathe. Throughout that Monday night Bock crouched under the side of his little bark, to shelter himself as far as he could from the severity of the weather ; holding the sail with one hand, and with the other guiding the tiller. As he sped onwards, he caught sight of several vessels, but none that he could hail or make for. On Tuesday morning he passed the Nore lightship, and hailed it; but as the wind was blowing strongly the men on board did not hear him. Soon afterwards he saw another light, which proved to be that on Garrison Point, and steered the boat towards it until she grounded.

After landing the passengers and crew whom she had rescued from the *Deutschland*, the steam-tug *Liverpool* returned to the wreck, and found that she was rapidly breaking up. Her bows had sunk considerably ; her stem had canted upwards ; and the sea had torn a terrible rent in her side. All day the shattered ship had been surrounded by smacks, the owners of which were busily engaged in removing passen-

gers' luggage and any property on which they could lay hands. The crew of the steam-tug went on board, and succeeded in removing twelve bodies,—eight women, a man, a lad, and two children. These were conveyed ashore for decent interment.

Of the eight women four were nuns, whose remains now lie in the Catholic cemetery at Leytonstone. A solemn dirge for their "repose" was sung in the Franciscan Church at Stratford, and after mass the congregation was addressed by Cardinal Manning. Standing beside the four coffins, he expressed his inability to find appropriate words for so solemn an occasion. And, indeed, if any man were untouched by that most beautiful though most mournful sight, no words *could* move him. But why should they mourn? Why lament for the noble souls whose devoted careers had been so suddenly brought to a close? The cardinal, after some further personal allusions, gave a graphic account of the wreck of the *Deutschland*, and of the prolonged sufferings of the deceased. The service for the dead was then proceeded with: the four coffins were removed, and interred in the presence of a vast concourse of people.

The circumstances attending the loss of the *Deutschland* awakened a remarkable and an unjustifiable outburst of indignant feeling in Germany. The German papers accused Englishmen generally, and the coast population of Essex in particular, of inhumanity, criminal neglect, unbounded selfishness; and even asserted that England rejoiced in any disaster which befell the ships of a great commercial rival. The subject was introduced into the debates of the German Parliament; but the Ministry wisely forbore to endorse such reckless and absurd charges, and declared their entire confidence in the impartiality of the inquiries instituted by the proper

English authorities. These inquiries satisfactorily proved, that though there had been a lamentable want of promptitude and energy, there had been no real reluctance to save life.

It may be interesting to the reader if we rapidly run through the evidence tendered at the inquest held at Harwich. That of the captain we have already given. Some questions put to him by the jurors elicited the fact that he was fully twenty miles out of his proper course ; and seemed to show that sufficient vigilance had not been exercised on board the lost vessel.

A Mr. Harvey, one of the Trinity House pilots, had joined the *Deutschland* as a passenger. On seeing the breakers, he said, Captain Brickenstein at once telegraphed to the engine-room " Full speed astern ;" and immediately a message arrived that the propeller was gone. Could the captain's order have been executed, the ship might have been saved : it was not more than a few minutes after the captain's signal when she struck the sand. Of course, the propeller being gone, she was perfectly helpless—a mere hulk, at the mercy of wind and wave.

Mr. Harvey added that it was twenty minutes after the vessel had struck before he saw the Knock light,* which he immediately recognized. It was about two miles distant. Rockets were sent up directly the ship struck, and were answered from the Knock within fifteen or twenty minutes. He saw no rockets from the Sunk until Monday evening, owing to the thickness of the weather. He heard a gun fired from the Knock lightship ; but this could not possibly be heard by the men on board the Sunk. His deliberate opinion was that no boat could possibly have ventured out to them until Monday evening, about six o'clock, when a life-boat

* The " Kentish Knock " lightship (in lat. $51^{\circ} 40' 50''$) has one light, which completes a revolution every minute, and is visible ten miles. The " Sunk " lightship (lat. $51^{\circ} 49' 28''$) has a fixed light ; the " Galloper " (lat. $51^{\circ} 45'$) two fixed lights.

might have reached the bows. It was probable that some lives were lost at the time the vessel stranded, for a violent sea beat upon her and washed her decks ; but most of those who perished, perished through exposure in the rigging. As they grew chill and benumbed, they lost their hold, fell to the deck, and were washed away.

After hearing other witnesses, the jury returned the following verdict :—“ We find that the deceased persons came by their death from exposure and drowning, in consequence of the stranding of the steamship *Deutschland* on the Kentish Knock, on Monday and Tuesday, December 6 and 7 ; the primary cause being, that owing to the state of the weather the captain lost his reckoning, and did not know where he was : but we do not attribute to him any criminal act. We also desire to append that we regret there was not on board the *Deutschland* the best known appliances for ascertaining the distance run, and the best system for lowering boats at sea ; also that there was not an experienced North Sea pilot in charge. We would also add that great credit is due to the captain and crew of the steam-tug *Liverpool*, for going out to the scene and bringing off so many survivors, who but for their assistance might all have perished.”

An inquest was afterwards held at Sheerness, on the bodies of the two men who died in the only boat that left the ship. The principal witness was Bock, the quartermaster. His evidence was little more than a recapitulation of the facts he stated on his arrival at Sheerness, which we have already put before the reader ; and the verdict was simply “ Death from cold and exposure after the wreck of the *Deutschland*.”

The Board of Trade afterwards held an official inquiry, which was attended by a representative of the German Government. It cannot be said to have resulted in the discovery of any particulars of importance. In truth, there has seldom

been a wreck all the facts relating to which could be so easily gathered up into the narrowest compass. A dark and stormy night—a ship out of her course striking on a sand-bank—boats capsizing in being lowered—signals of distress unobserved for many hours—no life-boat at hand, and arrival of a steam-tug on the scene after a prolonged delay, with the consequent loss of life through rolling billows and exposure to the winter cold ;—in these few lines are summed up all the circumstances attending the deplorably fatal wreck of the *Deutschland*.

LX.

LOSS OF THE "STRATHMORE."

July 1, 1875.



N many respects, the wreck of the *Strathmore* is the most remarkable of recent years. She was a fine iron clipper of 1472 tons, and left Gravesend for Otago, in New Zealand, on the 19th of April 1875, with fifty passengers, and a crew of thirty-eight officers and men. Month after month passed away, and she did not reach her destination. No news of her could be collected anywhere; and at length she was given up as lost, having gone down, it was supposed, with all hands, not a single soul escaping to tell the tale. Great was the surprise, therefore,—and, we may add, the delight,—when in March 1876 it was unexpectedly ascertained that the conjecture was only half true; that the vessel, indeed, had been lost, but that the crew and passengers had been in great part preserved. The account, as it first came to hand, was necessarily imperfect; but it appeared that on the 1st of July 1875 the *Strathmore* struck upon one of the rocks which form the Crozet Islands; and that on the 21st of the following January the survivors of her crew and passengers were discovered, and released from their compulsory detention. The long interval was very terrible. Water was the one thing which they found in

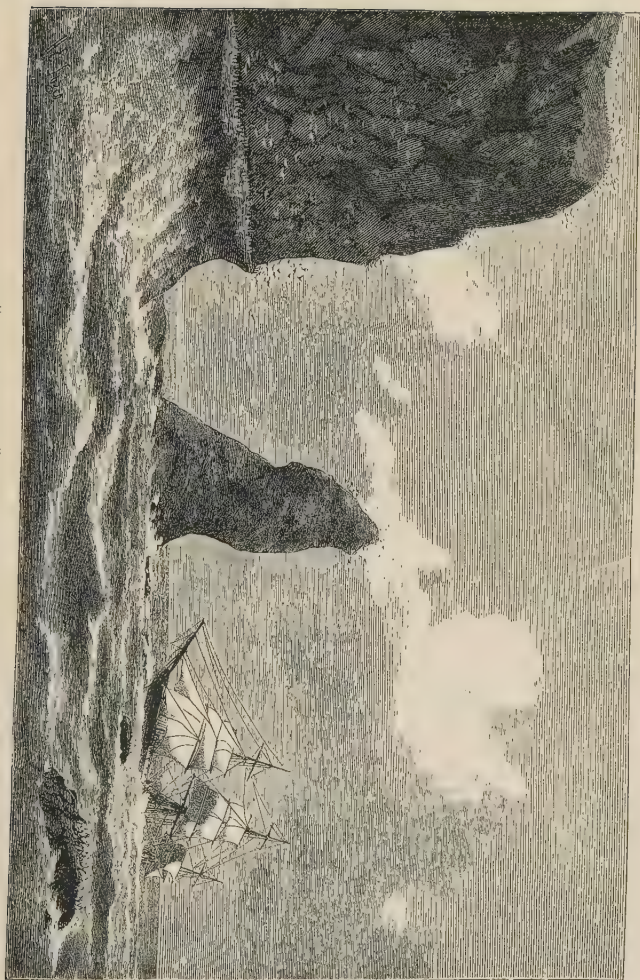
abundance. Food, shelter, and fire were not so easily obtained ; yet, in the severe climate of the Crozets, shelter and fire were scarcely less necessary than food. The result was, that of the eighty-nine souls on board the *Strathmore*, forty were lost at the time of the wreck : forty-nine made their escape from the sea to the barren rocks of the Crozets ; and of these, five proved unable to endure the privations to which they were exposed.

A writer in the *Times* remarks, that “ the notion of being cast upon a desert island and compelled to shift for oneself has something in it not altogether displeasing to the fancy. The adventures of Robinson Crusoe have entered so deeply into our minds, and have formed so large and so delightful a part of our first literary experiences, that the grown man bears still the impress which the boy received ; and though he would not, perhaps, willingly share the fate of his old favourite, yet it would be without any great sense of dismay that he would find himself forced to do so.” But then certain favourable conditions are necessary to make such a lot tolerable. The ship from which Crusoe was saved broke up so gradually as to afford him abundant opportunities of providing himself with nearly everything of importance that he was likely to want ; and if the island on which he was cast was uninhabited, at least its climate was genial and its soil fertile. So, too, in the “ Swiss Family Robinson,” the shipwrecked family were furnished with all that could make life comfortable ; while the island of which they took possession proved to be an Arcadia of beauty, and unsurpassed in the richness and excellence of its natural products. A similar good fortune attends Masterman Ready and his companions in Captain Marryat’s favourite story. Their island supplied all that the wrecked ship failed to afford. They were able to say, with the Duke in Shakespeare’s “ As You Like It,”—

"Hath not old custom made this life more sweet
Than that of painted pomp? Are not these woods
More free from peril than the envious 'world'?"

But actual shipwrecks do not fulfil the conditions of imaginary ones. At all events, in the *Strathmore* case they were unfortunately reversed. The survivors saved but little from the wreck: only a small quantity of firewood, some matches, a few biscuits, some wine, and some tins of confectionery—the poorest possible provision for forty-nine human beings during a period of nearly seven months. Then, again, the Crozets differ very widely in character from that "Eden-isle of Ocean" which the genius of Defoe has hallowed with an immortal interest. Sea-birds, weeds, water,—these were all they produced. No waving palms, no nutritious bread-fruit tree—none of the precious trees and shrubs and plants that gladdened Robinson Crusoe's existence. The firewood of the shipwrecked company was exhausted in less than a month, and no fuel could be procured anywhere. It is true that *all* the Crozet Islands are not so barren and inhospitable; but they had no means of removing to a more comfortable asylum. They were forced to make the best of what they had; and that best was very bad. The boats in which they had escaped from the stranded ship, and which would have been of such infinite value, had been left, soon after their first landing, in charge of a couple of sailors,—who lost them, it is supposed, during a night's debauch. The whole party, thus obliged to remain on the island-rock to which they had eagerly turned in their struggle for life, had little other resource, as we shall see, than the ocean-birds. Of these, the flesh and eggs served for food; their oily skins for firing, and partly for clothing. The small stock of biscuits was chivalrously reserved for the one lady who had been rescued from the wreck. As the Crozets lie further to the south, and consequently in a colder latitude, than any part

THE "STRATHMORE" ON THE CROZET ISLANDS.



of New Zealand, the castaways of the *Strathmore* suffered severely from lack of adequate clothing, proper covering at night, and sufficient shelter. July, moreover, is about the coldest month of the year in the Southern Hemisphere ; and it was a terrible misfortune to be flung, almost destitute, on a sterile rock in mid-ocean, at some distance from the usual track of navigation.

How deplorable was their lot, they do not seem to have recognized at first. Their thoughts were naturally engrossed in their escape from the sea which had swallowed up their comrades. They remembered how they had fought their way through the foam of breakers, and over jagged, weed-strewn points of rock, in spite of every difficulty, gaining at last that firm and solid earth in which man places always so much of his confidence. For the moment food was forthcoming, and they knew not but that the island might afford ample resources. And their vessel, though her ultimate fate could not be doubtful, was as yet above water and in their sight. The first thing to be done would be to return to the wave-shattered hulk, to bring back any who still remained on board, and replenish the scanty store of provisions which was all they could take with them in their flight for life. And it would not be long, they thought, before some means of escaping from the island would arise : meantime, they must be confident, cheerful, contented.

But this sanguineness of feeling quickly died away, as the outlook grew darker and darker. First, their boats were broken up, and thus they were unable to reach the wreck. Next, they found that their new home had never been intended for the residence of men. Water was plentiful, it is true, and birds and birds' eggs could be obtained ; but nothing else. On this meagre fare, however, it was possible for most of them to support life ; and so day after day they ate their

scanty meals, and looked out across the broad waters for some coming sail, for the ship which was to rescue them from their ocean-prison. But the morning dawned, and the evening closed in upon the horizon, without bringing the help for which they sighed and hoped. Weeks passed by, months passed by, and no ship came near; or, if one drew within sight, went on her way without noticing their ineffectual signals. Their spirits sank as they thought of the dreary future. Was it possible that they would remain, throughout the space of their existence, chained, like Prometheus in the old Greek story, to the wave-washed rock, tantalized ever and anon by the sight of those who could bring safety and succour, but denied the means of reaching or of holding communication with them? No wonder that a gloom came upon them when they contemplated the prospect of this life-long captivity! No wonder that a gloom came upon them as hope gave way to doubt, and doubt to a dreadful certainty,—the certainty of despair. Man is strong to endure anything so long as he can *hope*. Hope gives patience and courage; but when once its stimulus is withdrawn, our manhood seems to vanish with it. The suffering and suspense undergone by the castaways for seven dreary months were a sharper physical and mental trial than the lack of sufficient food and bodily comforts. The wonder is that so few gave way. Happily, before “the last sad extremity was reached,” while life still glowed in the veins, while sufficient strength remained for the enjoyment of life, and before body and mind had been irretrievably broken down, the rescue came; a rescue all the more welcome and joyful because it came after many previous disappointments. The rescue came, and the survivors of the *Strathmore* were delivered from their bondage.

The *Strathmore*, an iron clipper of the Dundee clipper line,

1472 tons, left Gravesend, as already stated, on the 19th of April 1875. Her voyage was not altogether unmarked by incident, for before she reached the equator her ill-disciplined crew contrived to get at some liquor which was on board. When crossing the equator the usual nautical ceremonies were observed, and it would seem that much drunkenness prevailed. On reaching southern latitudes, the ship was enveloped in mists and fogs which prevented observations being taken. An hour or two before she struck, the captain, whose vigilance and good conduct were readily acknowledged by the survivors, informed a passenger that, according to his calculations, she was then about eighty-seven miles to the south of the Crozet group of islands. About a quarter to four, however, on the 1st of July, there was a shock which made every timber shake; the vessel had struck on a rock, and she immediately began to settle by the stern. Efforts were made to lower the boats, but, except in the case of one life-boat, unsuccessfully. Meantime, heavy billows broke over the wreck, and the unfortunate people who could not get to the rigging lost their lives. In this way the captain, the first mate, and a Miss Henderson were swept overboard, and none could help them. Mrs. Walker, refusing to enter a boat until she could see her husband and brother, met with a similar fate. Percy Joslen and his brother, who were clinging to the shrouds, saw the life-boat pass under them, and made a daring leap for it. The brother was successful, but Percy was drowned. All but five of those who had taken refuge in the rigging now made their way down the masts to the deck-house, while the third mate, with three companions, put off in the dingy. After rowing about some hours, the gig, which had also been launched, found a landing-place, and falling in with the life-boat, towed it thither. Returning to the ship, she met the dingy, and

directed it to the landing-place. On her return journey she took off the five persons still clinging to the rigging, leaving a large party on the forecastle-head. The fog gathered in too thickly to admit of her making another trip, and so the night was spent by those on the forecastle-head in hunger and extreme cold.

On the following morning, however, they were duly rescued by the gig; while the other boats searched for wreckage, of which they recovered but little. That night the ship went down.

We now proceed to summarize the interesting narratives of some of the survivors,—beginning with that of the third mate, Mr. John C. Allan, a native of Montrose.

The crew of the *Strathmore*, he says, consisted of thirty-eight hands, all told; they had been gathered together in London, and a "worse lot" it would have been difficult to find. About the end of April, or early in May, they showed signs of discontent, and were frequently turbulent and troublesome. They broached the cargo, and many of them drank to excess. Thereupon the captain ordered the forecastle to be searched, and took possession of all the liquor. Afterwards the men presented themselves in a body, and demanded an increased daily allowance, which the captain promptly refused. Affairs now settled down quietly, and all went merry as a marriage-bell until the *Strathmore* got into southern latitudes, when the thickness of the fog prevented observations from being taken.

"About two A.M. of the morning on which she struck," says Mr. Allan, "the captain called me into his cabin, and asked me if I would have a glass of grog. I was suffering from toothache, and he gave me some whisky as good for it. He told me then that he was not quite sure of our position,

owing to the fog, but that he believed there were five islands thereabouts—which, however, he did not name. I left him in his cabin, and he lay down in his clothes. He appeared very anxious. He was a very careful man. I was in very great pain, and could not sleep even in the first watch.”

While Mr. Allan was leaning against the break of the poop, the first mate ordered him to go forward and listen if he heard anything. He went as far as the fore rigging, and became conscious of a dull sound, like breakers beating on the shore. He ran back towards the mate, and was about to speak to him, when a voice from the forecandle cried, “Hard a-starboard ! breakers right ahead !” The warning was repeated, and then the mate called out, “Hard a-port !—port forebrace !—let go the starboard braces !” which order was executed by Mr. Allan. Then the mate, seeing his error, exclaimed, “Hard a-starboard !” on which Mr. Allan let go the port braces. It was of no avail ; with a tremendous crash the ship struck. “All hands clear away the boats !” shouted mate and captain ; but not a single boat could be started ; and, indeed, by gross mismanagement, they were so placed as to be immovable. To two boats there were three davits. Mr. Allan examined the port life-boat—she was jammed ; the starboard life-boat—she too was jammed. He repaired to the port boat ; but the waves now came up to his knees, and to save his life he had to make for the mizzen rigging.

At this time, in some way or other, the life-boat cleared the ship, going out right astern between the mizzen rigging and the main.

Mr. Allan, with the second mate, the sailmaker, and some others, made their way as soon as possible to the top of the deck-house, and afterwards to the forecandle-head, where they remained until daybreak. Then, finding the dingy and the

gig on the top of the deck-house, they proceeded to launch them to leeward ; the second mate taking charge of the gig, and Mr. Allan of the dingy. In due time, as already stated, the dingy reached the island, but in making the shore was stove in, so that it was impossible to take her back to the wreck. Mr. Allan found the life-boat at the island, and those of the crew and passengers whom the gig had landed.

On the first day, matches having been brought ashore, they kindled a good fire, and having killed some young albatross, and birds like white pigeons, cooked and ate them. The first night they slept without shelter, except that Mrs. Wordsworth, the only female saved, was provided with the boat's cover, stretched over some oars.

Next day the gig repaired to the wreck to remove the other survivors, while a party rowed about in the life-boat and picked up a chest of blankets and other wreckage. That same day some of the hands were set to work to erect a shanty higher up the beach. It may be conjectured that, had the captain been spared, more efficacious measures would have been taken for the comfort and security of the survivors. But there seems to have been a want of control and supervision, and no strict discipline was maintained among the crew.

Building the shanty proved to be difficult work, the cold was so severe ; but at last it was completed, and a separate residence was provided for Mrs. Wordsworth.

The albatross supplied them with food for about three weeks. Then some gray birds were killed, and these furnished the meagre table until the end of August ; after which came the mollyhawks, and, in succession, the penguins. The barren soil of the island yielded only some green plants, like carrot tops, and a kind of clover, which tasted like cress, with a bitter-flavoured species of cabbage.

Knives, forks, and spoons, as well as a couple of parasols, had been discovered in the blanket-chest. The reader will probably smile at the mention of parasols, as articles little likely to be of use on a desert island; but the wires made capital needles. They were cut off below their point of junction at the top of the parasol; their ends were sharpened, and thus they were converted into sewing implements. With these the castaways stitched together the penguins' skins, using grass for thread.

Some tin cases of confectionery were also found, and the tins proved very serviceable as pots and vessels, until they gave way from constant employment. Then recourse was had to hollow stones for cooking purposes, the viands being stewed, fried, baked, or boiled with penguin fat instead of oil. The meagre diet and the terrible cold soon affected the weaker members of the shipwrecked party, and five of them died.

"There were six camps," continues Mr. Allan, in his simple, unvarnished tale; "and the bad characters seemed to keep together. The lady was treated by every one as well as she could be treated. The strong men took from the weak: for example, they took a pot from us because we were weak. I cannot account for one boat. I don't think she got away; I believe she was smashed on the deck. There are two or three caves which run right through the island. We built up a tower of turf to the height of about twelve feet, and put an oar on top; and when we saw ships we used to signal with blankets. We saw four ships, two of which were very close. The fifth took us off. The captain, as I hear, had gone up aloft to have a look at the islands, and noticed something unusual, and was standing in to see what it was, when the look-out in the crow's-nest reported that he saw our signals. Three boats came off that night, and took away five persons and Mrs. Wordsworth.

They brought us beef and bread. Before the boats left the weather became thick. Next morning they took us all off. The captain [Gifford] had wished to leave us on Hog Island until he had finished his cruise; but the crew would not have it—thinking, as I believe, that he would put into port to land us, and that they would have a chance of bolting. We should have done well enough on Hog Island; for it is a sealing-station, and there are pigs and rabbits, and a hut and boiler there.”

The ship that rescued them was an American whaler, the *Young Phoenix*. On the 26th of January she transferred twenty of them to the *Sierra Morena*, Captain Kennedy, who landed them at Galle on the 24th of February.

“When the ship struck,” says Allan—and in this statement he is confirmed by others—“the captain seemed *dazed*. He walked up and down, saying, ‘It’s all over with us. We are all drowned.’” A similar statement was made by Mr. Bentley, a passenger:—“When the ship struck I saw the captain on the poop. He was walking up and down, with his chin on his breast and his arms folded. He did nothing at all, but seemed heart-broken.” The suddenness of the catastrophe apparently robbed him of all resource, all presence of mind; and it may be that he was conscious of his inability to compel from his crew that prompt and willing obedience which alone could be of service in such an hour of overwhelming peril.

Mr. Allan, in continuation of his narrative, says:—“The island seemed to me about three miles long and half a mile broad, at the widest part. There were no signs that anybody had been on the island before. We were wrecked on the 1st of July, and we left on the 22nd of January. At first everything was divided, but not properly, for those who had sore feet got but little. What we saved of the liquor was

left in the charge of the second mate,"—of whose conduct the passengers did not speak favourably,—“but those who were strong got more than the weak. There was no scurvy; but there were cases of persons frost-bitten, and of bowel-complaints. The second-class passengers were all lost. The seas broke very heavily. The ship disappeared altogether on the second night. There were no screams or cries whatever. The ship settled by the stern in a quarter of an hour after she first struck. There was no regular attempt to save the women, because we could not get the boats out.”

It is difficult to read the preceding statement without forming an impression that on board the *Strathmore* discipline was unhappily lax, that her officers were deficient in energy, and that her crew lacked all the qualities which we have been accustomed to regard as characteristic of the English seaman. With proper foresight, and with a vigorous use of the appliances at hand, scarcely a single life should have been lost. It must be remembered that the ship held together for nearly forty-eight hours after she first struck. Not only should her crew and passengers have reached the land in safety, but they ought to have been able to collect such a quantity of stores and provisions as would have rendered their residence on the island comparatively free from hardship.

Let us now take up the narrative of Mr. George D. Crombie, of Stockwell, London, a first-class passenger. Of course it repeats many of the details already given, but it supplies some which are new, and it will assist us to realize a vivid and accurate conception of the circumstances attending the wreck and the seven months' captivity.

He states that of the fifty passengers seven were women,

and fifteen children. The ship carried no doctor, though she had eighty-nine souls on board. The captain, Macdonald, had been at sea for upwards of thirty years, and appeared a careful man. After describing the drunken outburst of the crew, and the voyage into southern latitudes, Mr. Crombie comes to the night of the 30th, when the captain told him he thought the ship was about eighty-seven miles from the Crozet group. She must, however, have been much further south. He retired to rest about two A.M., and in less than two hours was aroused by a grating noise, and almost immediately afterwards felt the vessel strike. The cabin passengers sprang from their berths, and huddled on their clothes; and Mr. Bentley, as soon as he could, hastened to warn the ladies, but found them already up.

Rushing upon deck, they found that it was still quite dark, and they heard the captain say, "Good-bye to you all! It is all over! Save yourselves! To the boats at once!" The port-quarter boat was nearest to Mr. Crombie when he reached the poop, and he threw into it his plaid and rug. With some others he tried to get the boat down, but a heavy sea broke, and washed them away. For safety Mr. Crombie took to the rigging, where he remained until daybreak, by which time the ship had sunk under water, all but the fore-castle-head. Making his way to the roof of the deck-house, he assisted the second mate and his fellow-survivors in launching the gig and the dingy; the former setting off with the second mate and eight persons, the dingy with the third mate, and both steering towards the rocks which lay about a hundred yards distant, rising from the sea like a lofty precipitous wall. Eleven, as Mr. Crombie thought, remained on the deck-house, and one on the rigging.

Late in the afternoon the gig returned, and took away five passengers who were clinging to the mizzen-top, and

whom Mr. Crombie had not before seen. Away they went for the land and safety, while the others were left exposed to the severity of the weather, a dense fog rendering the return of the boat impossible. Needless to say that they spent a miserable night, hanging suspended over the heaving billows, with no other sustenance than a few biscuits. Their clothes were wet through, and the extreme cold chilled their very blood. But soon after daybreak the gig came back, and with it returned the hope and sense of life.

The sea being much more tranquil, they reached the shore easily, finding a landing-place about a mile and a half south-east of the point where the ship had struck. The survivors, when all had assembled, proved to be forty-nine in number, including Mrs. Wordsworth, the only lady saved, her son, and a little boy of three years old, whose father was rescued, but his mother lost. A Mr. Henderson, whose sister was on deck with him, saved himself from being washed over by clinging to the rail; but his sister was carried into the gulf of waters. All the women and passengers, as soon as the ship struck, naturally rushed to the poop; but when the boats proved to be useless, they were washed overboard by the rolling billows which beat irresistibly on that part of the wrecked ship. As, soon after she struck, she settled down by the stern, all who were unable to take refuge in the rigging perished. The boats had never been the objects of examination throughout the long voyage; what wonder, therefore, that, when wanted, they should have been found jammed in their fastenings, and almost incapable of being moved. After the catastrophe, Captain Macdonald, says Mr. Crombie,—in this confirming other evidence,—seemed to lose all presence of mind. He walked up and down the poop with his hands behind him, and apparently courted the fate

which so soon overtook him. Along with the chief mate, he was washed overboard by the third wave.

The island on which the survivors landed was "a desolate place, a refuge for sea-birds, and devoid of trees." It is described as about two and a half miles in length, and nowhere exceeding half a mile in breadth. The shanty which the castaways erected was built of stones and turf. They found albatross on the island, and a kind of gray bird. On these they subsisted for some time; and when their period of migration arrived, a flock of mollyhawks visited the island. These were succeeded by the penguins, whose eggs proved a great luxury. Their skins were used as fuel; and, stitched together, they served for clothes and boots. At first the birds were tame enough, and easily killed; but the constant depredations made upon their families aroused at last a spirit of resistance; they would show fight when attacked, and rush at their assailants with their beaks.

In course of time, the survivors on the island divided into six camps; an arrangement which secured a tolerable degree of peace and orderliness. No one seems to have acted as leader, however; each did what appeared good in his own eyes; and the most undoubted communistic notions of property prevailed. The stores saved from the wreck comprised two barrels of gunpowder, one cask of port wine, two cases of rum, two of gin, one of brandy, one of preserves, and eight tins of sweets. The liquor lasted four or five weeks; being served out, at first, both night and morning, and afterwards at night only, until it was reduced to a small quantity, and reserved for medicinal purposes. A few matches had been saved from the wreck; and a lamp, fed by fat from the birds, was kept continually burning.

The weather during the first week of their detention was mild and genial in comparison with what followed. They

had been wrecked at about the beginning of winter in those latitudes, and suffered severely from ice and snow. Fortunately, they had always a plentiful supply of fresh water; to which circumstance their general good health is, doubtlessly, to be attributed. For of the five deaths which occurred, one was the result of exposure; another of lockjaw, induced by injury to the sufferer's feet; and a third was that of a child.

Such are the principal facts recorded by Mr. Crombie. We may here introduce an account of the island-group with which the wreck of the *Strathmore* has made us so familiar. It consists of five islands, in lat. $46^{\circ} 27'$ S., and long. $52^{\circ} 14'$ E., lying directly in the middle of the great Eastern highway to Australia and India. Dangerous as the cluster is, outward-bound vessels frequently approach it, as it affords them an opportunity of testing the accuracy of their chronometers. At certain seasons of the year fog and ice abound in their neighbourhood, adding materially to the dangers of an Australian passage. Whalers occasionally visit the islands for the sake of the seals and birds frequenting them, but the supply has greatly diminished of late years.

The *Strathmore* is not the only vessel that has been wrecked on the Crozets. In 1821 the sailing-cutter *Princess of Wales* struck on the rocks of Possession Island. The crew, after a detention of a year and ten months, were rescued in comparatively good health and spirits. One of the sailors, named Goodridge, subsequently wrote an account of his life on the island, somewhat in the "Robinson Crusoe" style, and lived for many years on the profits arising from its sale.

The Crozet Islands were discovered by Marion du Fresne, a French explorer, in January 1772; but as he was shortly

afterwards massacred in New Zealand, three years elapsed before the discovery was known. It was in 1775 that, from Lieutenant Crozet, Marion du Fresne's second in command, Captain Cook learned of their existence. They were visited by Sir James Ross in 1840.

All five islands are of volcanic origin, with dark rocky cliffs, against which the waters beat with a perpetual roar. Apostle Island, on which the *Strathmore* struck, consists properly of two islets, separated by a narrow, rock-studded channel, and so precipitous as to be almost inaccessible. Possession Island, the largest of the group, measures about twelve miles in circumference, and is composed of volcanic rock, scantily covered with vegetation. Next in size is Penguin or Inaccessible Island; its former name alluding to the enormous number of ocean-birds which haunt its shores. It is barren, steep, and rugged; at a distance it seems a sea-washed mass of fantastically-shaped pinnacles.

A third-class passenger on board the *Strathmore*--Mr. Robert Aikenhead Wilson, of Kirkcaldy—furnishes the following account:—

“I was on the fore-castle-head from ten to twelve on the night before the wreck, and the fore-castle man then knew that we were in dangerous waters. When the accident occurred it was the mate's watch. I was in the house on the main-deck, asleep, when I heard Black Jack call out, ‘Hard a-starboard.’ I dressed immediately and ran out. When I was half dressed I heard the vessel grate amidships. When I got out I saw the passengers and crew rushing about. I went off at once towards my brother's place. He was outside in the saloon. The captain came down just then and said that there was no hope; that we were all lost; and he was bidding every one ‘Good-bye.’ Mrs. Walker and her

child were there. Then we went towards the store-room; but my brother said it was useless remaining, as we should poop a sea immediately. We went on the main-deck, and next on the poop, followed by Mrs. Walker. The men were at the boats, and we hastened towards the starboard one. My brother cut two or three of the lashings, and the captain took the knife out of his hand, but did not seem quite to know what to do with it. The ship then pooped a sea which came up to about our knees, and as the boat still remained fast, I and a few others climbed into the rigging. There appeared to be persons in the boats, which were jammed; everything was stiff.

“Mrs. Walker refused to get into the boats, because she could see neither her husband nor child. Directly after we climbed into the rigging the second mate followed us with the child, which he passed to my brother; then he returned to the deck, but had to come up again. At this time seas were breaking over the vessel, and a heavy swell prevailed. It was pitch dark. I mounted to the mizzen-top, which was crowded. The second mate and others had gone on to the main-mast by the mizzen-topmast-stay, but as we found it had been carried away, we thought it best to remain where we were. At day-break my brother went up to the cross-trees, and as the top-gallant-stay proved to be all right, he slid across into the main-top. All of us, save five, followed; reached the deck-house; and thence made our way to the fore-castle-head. The second mate called to those of the crew assembled there to come and launch the gig and dingy; but most of them would not obey. So we went to the deck-house and got off the boats.....

“We rowed along the north of the island, going eastwards, but found no landing-place; coming round the other side, however, we effected a landing about the south-east of the island. Very near this point we met the life-boat. There was a

great deal of seaweed, and we towed the life-boat, which was full of water. She had been stove in, but we all managed to land without accident. The dingy, which had also been stove in, followed.

“The first thing I did was to knock over a white bird, which was something like a crow. The gig went back once that day, and brought the five out of the mizzen-top. We removed the cover from a boat, and placed it over the oars as a shelter for Mrs. Wordsworth. A fire was lighted, and the white bird and some albatrosses were cooked. There was a fire outside the tent, and some of the sailors gathered round it, and would not move. Some of them appeared to be drunk. The second mate was lying half under the tent, and calling out all night, giving orders as if he were on board. Mrs. Wordsworth was inside the tent, and everything that could be of use was given to her and the child.

“We slept out on the bare rock until about six A.M. or later. Then I crept under the canvas; but a passenger was brought in and laid right over me. He died before I got up, but I was not aware of it until he was moved off. That morning the gig went to the wreck again, and the life-boat and dingy, to try and recover what they could. The gig returned with the rest of the survivors, and some clothes and matches. All that day the boats were picking up wreckage; while we on shore looked out a site for a house. We pitched upon a place half-way up the hill, where there was an overhanging rock; and by nightfall had raised a wall three or four feet high. Its size (that is, the size of the area thus enclosed) was about eighteen feet in length by eight feet in width. We stretched a boat-covering over as far as we could. It was blowing a gale. Very nearly all of us took shelter in this house; but Black Jack and some others went about twenty yards higher up, and established themselves

there. While Black Jack and William Vining were in charge of the boats that night, they were lost.....

"It had been our intention to go to Hog Island before we lost the boats. The second mate appeared to me to be afraid of the men. Mrs. Wordsworth was treated with the utmost courtesy by every one."

It now only remains for us to give the second mate's narrative. At first we shall allow him to speak for himself, but the later portion it will be sufficient to give in a somewhat condensed form.

"*June 30.*—Thick foggy weather, with drizzly rain and a moderate breeze from the south-west. Between the hours of four and six P.M., Captain Macdonald gave me orders to make fast all fore and aft canvas except the fore-topmast-staysail, and also to clew up and furl fore and mizzen-top-gallant-sail, which I accordingly did, at the same time seeing all braces and running gear clear for use. At six P.M. I hove the log, and found the ship was going at the rate of six knots, which, as soon as I was relieved by the chief mate, I marked down on the log-slate, along with the course steered while I had been on deck. At eight P.M. I relieved Mr. Ramsay, receiving strict injunctions to keep a sharp look-out, as we were getting into the proximity of the Crozet Islands. I accordingly passed the word forward to the look-out man to report anything he saw or heard; and to the quarter-master to be very particular with his steering. During the first watch Captain Macdonald very seldom left the deck, the fog being so dense that we could not see the ship's length ahead. He told me that the course we were taking should carry us well to the southward of the Crozet Islands. Wind and weather continued the same up to midnight, when, on being relieved by the first mate, I went below.

“During my watch below I was partly aroused by a cry of ‘Breakers ahead;’ but my berth being well in off the deck, the cry did not reach me distinctly enough to startle me; but, soon after, when I heard the sailmaker shout, ‘She’ll clear it, boys, she’ll clear it,’ I knew there was something in the way—which I soon had further proof of, the ship striking on the rocks.* I very soon threw on some clothes, and ran on deck; and on reaching the poop I saw the first mate and some of the crew clearing away the port quarter-boat. I mustered together a few hands to clear away the starboard quarter-boat; but we had no sooner cut the grips, and lifted the boat a few inches with the tackles, than the sea came rolling over the poop, washing away the two men who were knocking out the chocks, the rest of us being more or less washed about. I gathered a few hands together and tried it again; but by this time the seas came rolling over the poop in quick succession, making it impossible for us to get that boat out, and scattering the men who were working with me, a good many of them being washed overboard and drowned. Those who had been getting the port quarter-boat out had also abandoned her, as she had been stove by a sea, and rendered useless. As the ship was now fast settling down aft, most of those who had been working at the quarter-boats now got into the port life-boat, and, after cutting the grips, a heavy sea came rolling over the poop, and by nothing less than a miracle floated her clean over the starboard life-boat and starboard davits clear of the wreck, with eighteen of the crew and passengers aboard of her, a lady being included in the number. Captain Macdonald and the first mate are supposed to have been washed overboard by this sea, as they were never seen afterwards.”

Mr. Peters then describes his rescue of Mr. Walker’s little

* The *Strathmore* struck on the “Twelve Apostles” rocks, which lie at the extreme north-west point of the Crozet group.

boy, and his own escape, after serious risk, into the mizzen-top, where he found between ten and twenty of the crew and passengers already assembled. By this time the after part of the ship was completely under water, so some of them ran up the topmast and top-gallant rigging, intending to go down the fore and aft stays, and so reach the top of the forward house, where the gig and dinky were both lashed. All who took to the stays contrived to reach their goal; but one who foolishly tried to run along the deck from the mainmast, paid for his temerity by being dashed against the house, and either stunned or drowned. We have already heard how the gig and dinky were launched; but Mr. Peters states that the latter was stove in while being got overboard. The accident was remedied by the simple precaution of leaving the canvas cover on her, so that she was still able to carry three persons with tolerable safety.

“Seven or eight of us got into the gig, and I told those who were left on board that I would come back for them as soon as we could find a landing. After a great deal of trouble we found a place where we could scramble ashore, although with great danger to the boat; but as we were following towards it, I sighted another boat, which turned out to be the port life-boat with eighteen of the crew and passengers on board. She was full of water, so that they were unable to pull her through the seaweed towards the landing. After putting ashore all but three hands, I returned to the ship; but as it was impossible to take off that night all who were left, I took those in the mizzen-top first, as being in greater danger than those on the fore-castle-head.

“After a good deal of risk, we got all that were in the mizzen-top aboard the boat, the little boy being amongst them; whereupon I shouted to those on the fore-castle-head that, though I could not come back again that night, I would fetch them as early as possible in the morning.

“We passed a miserable night, the softest rock being our bed, which was not rendered more agreeable by the coldness of the weather. Coming back from the wreck, we had picked up a few cases of spirits, which were allowed out during the night to everybody, thereby keeping a little heat in our bodies. I was glad when daylight began to make its appearance, so that I could go back to the ship,—which I found as we had left her the night before. I made the men in the fore-castle-head get all the clothes they could out of the fore-castle, and pass them into the boat, before I took them aboard themselves, most of the persons ashore being only half-clad. Besides the clothes, we also secured a few boxes of matches, which were very useful; and about a dozen biscuits, being all that could be found in the shape of provisions. On landing, we gave the biscuits to Mrs. Wordsworth, as the birds’ flesh was so rank that she could not eat it.

“After making a poor meal of half-cooked birds, we returned to the ship for the purpose of getting a sail to make a tent with; but we were unable to board her on account of the surf breaking over her. We had to be content, therefore, with picking up what we could find floating round about. On coming back to the landing, we found that the life-boat had also been tolerably successful in collecting a few things; having come across a passenger’s chest, out of which we got a few articles, such as blankets, sheetings, table-covers, knives, forks, spoons. Firewood also was picked up where it could be conveniently done, because there was no wood on the island.

“During the time we had been away, those left on shore had built a wall in front of an overhanging ledge of rock; so that, with the boats’ covers for a roof, we had a little better shelter than we had the night before, although the place was so small that we could only sit huddled together as close as

we could possibly pack. After serving out an allowance of spirits all round, we tried to sleep; but owing to our cramped condition, and the bitterly cold weather, we were unable to obtain repose. In the course of the night we had the misfortune to lose our boats, which were moored in smooth water, and a watch set over them on the shore; but the wind, suddenly chopping, broke them adrift, and we had the pleasure of seeing them floating about, bottom up, completely out of our reach. If there had been a beach anywhere in the island, we might have saved them by hauling them up; but the island was so steep and rugged that it was with the utmost difficulty we ourselves could scramble ashore. The loss of our boats was a great misfortune, as we were unable to pick up any more firewood, or go back to the wreck, which I intended to do, in the hope of collecting some provisions, when she went to pieces. During the day some of us walked over the island to have a look at the wreck. Nothing could be seen of her but a few small spars entangled among some of the gear, and thus kept floating over her side. During the remainder of the time we were on the island we were miraculously provided with food. Though every now and then it seemed as if not another bird were left on the island, we always managed to catch a few, which kept us alive until their numbers again increased."

The second mate proceeds to record that they ate a kind of herb resembling, as already stated, the tops of carrots. Their supply of firewood was small, and, with all their care, did not last longer than a month. Then they had recourse to birds' skins to replenish and maintain their fires.

We have mentioned that five persons died upon the island; and Mr. Peters states, as a curious incident, that the corpses never stiffened, but were as pliable when buried as were the living bodies. The first victim passed away on July 2nd.

The next was Thomas Henderson, on the 2nd of September. The last was the little child, who died on Christmas day from lack of proper nourishment.

Though four ships passed very near the island, they do not appear to have seen the castaways' signals; but on the 21st of January a vessel headed in towards the shore. It lowered a couple of boats, whose officers landed, and on hearing the sad story of the survivors agreed to take them off. It was then near nightfall, so the work of embarkation was postponed until the following morning, except that the captain carried at once to his ship Mrs. Wordsworth and her son, and a few others most in need of relief. The ship proved to be an American whaler, the *Young Phoenix*, commanded by Captain D. L. Gifford. As soon as they got on board they were treated with the greatest kindness, being supplied with new clothes, of which they were lamentably in want, and, after a good hot bath, despatched to bed. On the next day, as soon as the ship was conveniently placed, boats were sent ashore for the remainder of the castaways. Into one of these Mr. Peters got, carrying with him wooden crosses to plant at the heads of the graves of his less fortunate shipmates, and also a sealed bottle containing a brief narrative of the wreck and the events that followed. The remainder of the crew and passengers were then removed on board the whaler, receiving the most friendly attentions.

After a consultation with his officers, Captain Gifford, though at a serious disadvantage to his owners, himself, and his crew, resolved on sacrificing the season's fishing, and steering for the Mauritius, in order to place the survivors of the *Strathmore* on a homeward route.

On the 26th of January they sighted a ship bound to the north-east, which was signalled and boarded. She proved to be the Liverpool liner *Sierra Morena*, on her voyage to Kur-

rahee. The captain agreed to take twenty of them from the whaler, and carry them on to his port of destination. The remainder were afterwards received on board the *Childers*, and landed at Rangoon.

It may be interesting to record the names of the saved, in case any of their friends or relatives should chance to peruse this simple account of their adventures:—

T. B. Peters, and J. C. Allan, second and third mates; G. F. Buttenshaw, and D. Wilson, first and second stewards; J. Pirie, carpenter; W. Smith, sailmaker; C. K. Jackson, boatswain; J. Wilson, J. Leask, J. Fitzmaurice, C. Tookey, T. Blackmore, H. Turner, F. Carmichael, C. Preston, J. Evans, J. Warren, J. Staworth, H. Erickson, M. Rioldam, W. Venning, J. Wilson, sen., J. Wilson, jun., E. Sharp, and J. Fruit, seamen; J. Nicoll, engine-driver; J. Tuck, third steward; Mrs. and Mr. C. Wordsworth, F. Bentley, S. Joslin, G. Crombie, H. Keith, — Walker, first-class passengers; and W. Rook, G. Ward, J. Ward, G. Skidmore, T. Standing, R. Wilson, W. Wilson, J. Knight, and R. Sinnie, third-class passengers.

Since the foregoing pages were written, Mr. Peters, the second mate of the *Strathmore*, has published the diary which he kept during his detention on the island. It contains some details of interest which may fairly be regarded as supplementary to those already given.

Passing over the incidents connected with the loss of the vessel, about which he tells us nothing new, we come to the entry under July 4th:—

“Sent two parties out to erect two flagstaffs, going with one of them myself, after which we went round one side of the island, and saw our boats—gig, dingy, and life-boat, the two former being bottom up, and the life-boat in halves, and

no possible means of getting at them, they having been washed during the night through a sort of tunnel, which led through underneath our island. We caught a few birds and came down to our hovel. When the other party came in they told me that the ship had backed astern and gone down in deep water; which I was very sorry to hear, as I had intended to get some gear out of her to build a house with, and some ropes, and, if possible, cooking utensils; but we afterwards found it to be impossible to get down to her from the cliff without rope. There are to-day about twelve of us laid up with frost-bitten and swollen feet, and of course they are no good for doing any hard work, or hunting birds. Our stock of wood is very limited, and I see no possible means of getting more, as there is no beach, and we have no boats. We had our evening meal of young albatross, white crows, and what we call graybacks, which we devoured with good appetites, and comforted ourselves afterwards with a small allowance of grog, and then packed ourselves away for the night. As we cannot all sleep under one ledge, some of us had to find other holes in the rock, where we could stow ourselves away,—Mrs. Wordsworth, her son, Mr. Walker and child, getting the best and snuggest corner of the shanty. We all keep up very well; Mrs. Wordsworth in particular showing herself to be a true woman, refusing any dainties firmly, unless we all have our share of them. We passed a scrambling sort of a night, being compelled to lie almost piled on top of one another, so as to keep warm and economize room."

On the 6th of July, some of the castaways went to survey the wreck, but could discover no means of getting down to it so as to secure a supply of stores. At night the little company read a chapter of the Bible, and sang a hymn; an excellent custom, which seems to have been preserved with tolerable regularity throughout their island-captivity.

It was a clear, bright day on the 8th, and many wistful eyes watched the horizon eagerly, in the hope of descrying a sail. But none appeared. They could see two large islands from their own, and a cluster of rocks, but none seemed so well stocked with birds ; and had it been otherwise, the lack of boats would have effectually prevented them from migrating. Some of the castaways now began to work at a kind of cavern, but, from want of proper implements, made but little progress. Bentley, Henderson, and Crombie endeavoured to manufacture some signal-rockets. They were unsuccessful, because most of the powder was soaked with salt water.

Previously they had been much troubled by the long darkness, the night consuming fifteen hours out of the twenty-four ; but now they filled a bottle with albatross fat, and inserting some cotton for a wick, obtained a very good light. To save matches, this was kept continually burning, like the fire on Vesta's altar !

The next three entries are sufficiently doleful :—

“ *July 9.—Wet and miserable.* Nothing particular doing ; only caught enough birds for food, which little piece of excitement wears out our strength, and we gradually get weaker ; but we trust some ship will take us off here, which hope keeps our spirits up.

“ *July 10.*—This morning looked very well at first, but broke down before mid-day, raining heavily, and making us feel *very miserable and uncomfortable* ; for part of our roof being calico, it was no protection against heavy rain, although it might keep out the dews which fall sometimes at night. Mrs. Wordsworth feels very poorly to-day.

“ *July 11.*—Nothing particular to-day. Weather rather better than it has been. Read a few chapters and sang a hymn or two during the day. *All anxiously looking for a sail.*”

This last entry reminds us of a fine passage in Tennyson's *Enoch Arden*, who heard

"The myriad shriek of wheeling ocean-fowl,
The league-long roller thundering on the reef....
As down the shore he ranged, or all day long
Sat often in the seaward-gazing gorge,
A shipwrecked sailor, waiting for a sail."

On the 15th the weather was cold and frosty, the wind occasionally blowing in great gusts, and bringing with it heavy showers of snow, which completely covered the ground. A flag-staff had been erected on the top of the hill, but in such stormy weather the flag had to be hauled down. A couple of men, therefore, were stationed on the look-out, with a "table-cloth" to hoist for signal, should any vessel heave in sight.

Tempestuous weather continued for some days. On the 17th, Stanbury, one of the third-class passengers, was seized with lockjaw. He lingered until the 19th, when he died. The survivors dug a grave and buried him before nightfall, one of the party reading a chapter from the Bible by way of funeral service. This incident seems very naturally to have added considerably to the gloom of the unfortunate castaways.

We read of heavy falls of snow and violent gales for the remainder of the month. From their want of proper nourishment, clothing, and shelter, the little company of prisoners must have been sorely tried by these atmospheric severities. The 31st completed their first month on the island, and proved to be a day of gloom. Their firewood was exhausted, and they were at their wit's end for appliances to cook their food. Necessity is the mother of invention, and at length they improvised a kind of fuel out of birds' skins, with the fat on them. These flamed merrily, and gave forth a genial heat. By this time three huts had been constructed; in the smallest of which three persons lived, eleven in another, and the re-

mainder, including Mrs. Wordsworth, Mr. Walker and child, in the principal or largest.

The 1st of August was a Sunday. No hunting was done; and, in due commemoration of the day of rest, some hymns were sung, and portions of the Bible read.

Between August 11th and August 25th we read that nothing particular occurred. The weather had greatly improved, though it was still changeable. The dull monotony of the ocean-horizon remained unbroken by any sail. Two other caves were prepared as sleeping-apartments, in anticipation of the warm summer weather, which would render too close companionship undesirable. The graybacks had obligingly taken to laying eggs, so that a little variety of diet was possible, and was much enjoyed.

On the 31st quite a sensational event interrupted the dreary tenor of their island-life. One of the look-out men rushed down from the hill-crest in frantic excitement, which quickly communicated itself to the whole company when he announced—"A sail in sight!" The strongest hastened at once to the signal-station, but were sorely disappointed when they found that she was at a great distance from the Crozets; at such a distance, indeed, that only to the keenest visions was she visible at all, and to these she seemed to be standing to the eastward. This glimpse of hope, transitory as it was, cheered the spirits of many, by the proof it afforded that their island-prison did not lie wholly out of the track of navigation; others, however, it saddened and depressed, because the ship had failed to see their signals.

On the same day arrived some birds of a kind not previously observed on the island. They were something like an albatross, but smaller. Most opportune was their appearance, for very few graybacks remained, and these had been rendered shy and suspicious by constant hunting. A few small ice-

bergs which floated past their rocky cliffs were welcomed as a novelty, and also as a sign that the ice was breaking up, and summer drawing near.

On the following day a large berg drifted into the bay about a mile to the south of the shanty, and ran aground. As the wind blew from that direction, it made the atmosphere perceptibly colder.

On the 2nd of September, Mr. Henderson, who from the first had been in delicate health, succumbed to the rude experiences of an island-life, and was decently interred. Among so small a community, and one so disastrously circumstanced, this second death must necessarily have had a very depressing effect.

Here is a striking entry for the 4th :—"Out early in the morning, but were unable to find many birds. The kind we have been living on for the last thirty or forty days seem to have left us altogether, and what are visible being so shy that we could not get near them ; but when we thought we were going hungry to bed, a great flock of the new birds made their appearance, and, Sunday as it was, we killed between three and four hundred of them, knocking them down among the rocks,—not without great danger to ourselves, as the cliffs where they build their nests are composed of crumbling rocks, which, if you are not very careful, will break off under your feet, and launch you into the sea, a distance of some hundreds of feet."

On the morning of the 13th a sail hove in sight on the south side of the island, and so close in towards the shore that the watchers could discern her hull. She was scudding before a south-westerly wind ; and a coverlet was raised on the flagstaff, and other signals made from the highest points of the island, in the hope of attracting her attention. How eagerly they traced her course as she came up from the waste

of waters, and broadened on their sight! With what a profound feeling of suspense they waited—waited—waited—expecting every moment some recognition of their presence; expecting every moment to see her head turned towards them! And with how terrible a sense of disappointment they saw her go on her way unheeding, steering in safety through the narrow rock-strewn channel, and passing on to that civilized world which they so anxiously longed to regain!

Speaking of the week September 15th to September 22nd, the second mate records that a new hut had been built and occupied by six of the party. Most of the castaways, however, had been hunting for what they called “mutton-birds.” These live in holes on the ground, so that with them and the whale-birds together the island was perforated like a honeycomb. The men exercised all their skill to catch the young birds, on account of the superior sweetness and tenderness of their flesh.

A few days later the sailmaker found a piece of oak, about two feet and a half in length, at a height above the sea of some hundreds of feet. It excited much curiosity,—

“Not that the thing was either rich or rare,—
They wondered how it ever had got *there*!”

It was the first piece of wood they had fallen in with. At this time the island was visited by great flocks of penguins, for the purpose of breeding; and their fat proved very useful to the islanders in keeping up their lights and fires, while the eggs were acceptable as additions to their scanty supply of food.

Penguins continued to arrive daily, and mingled their loud, discordant, braylike clamour with the roar of the ocean-breakers. Their habits are very peculiar. When on shore, they are arranged in as compact a manner and in ranks as

regular as a regiment of soldiers. The order they observe is noteworthy : the young birds are collected in one place, the moulting birds in another, the sitting hens in a third, the clean hens in a fourth ; and so on. It is said that so strictly do birds in a similar condition congregate, that should one which is moulting intrude among those which are clean, it is straightway ejected.

The females hatch the eggs by keeping them close between their thighs ; and if disturbed during the incubating process, they move away, carrying the eggs with them. The male meanwhile goes to sea to collect food for the female, which soon waxes plump and fleshy. After the young one wakes into life, both parents roam afar, and bring home food for it ; with the result that the old birds lose their fatness, while the new-comer grows so corpulent as scarcely to be able to walk. In their roosting-places they sit quite upright ; and they walk erect until they arrive at the beach, when they fling themselves on their breast to confront the heavy sea that awaits them.

On Tuesday, October 19th, Mr. Peters writes :—

“ All our boots are done long ago, and we make penguin-skins into things like boots, sewing them with canvas threads, or worsted taken from our comforters or stockings. Penguin-skin boots are a poor substitute for that article, and only wear from one to three days if we walk about, the rocks being so rugged that they soon cut them all to pieces. Our clothes are also getting very ragged, and we are all heartily tired of our banishment from civilized society. If we stop here much longer, we will soon have a slang language of our own which strangers would not understand. We are now almost entirely living on penguins' eggs and young mutton-birds ; but we would willingly exchange the eggs for potatoes.”

It is a curious speculation, what would have become of these unfortunate people had they never been delivered from their rock of captivity. There seems no reason for supposing that they would have perished from want of food, and to the rigour of the climate they would probably have grown accustomed. But deprived as they were of all the tools and implements which call forth ingenuity—without any object or aim to maintain their mental activity—reduced to the necessity of hunting every day for daily food—and confined within a narrow area, the very monotony of which must have prejudicially influenced the mind,—it is impossible to arrive at any other conclusion than that they would gradually have fallen into a stage of savagery. The impressions of their former life would have faded away; and when the hope of rescue had died—as in time it would have done—nothing would have remained but the blankness of desolation.

On the 23rd of October occurred a third death—that of William Husband, the quartermaster, a man advanced in years.

“The most of us,” writes Peters, “have been busy these last few days washing our bodies and clothes, neither of them being very clean after our three months and a half’s wear; but as we had no soap, and the weather being so cold, we could do nothing towards cleaning ourselves until the eggs got so plentiful, when we found that they were a pretty good substitute for soap.”

On the 19th of November arrived a fresh legion of penguins, relieving the first comers, who “had been sitting on their eggs” as if they were going to starve themselves to death. Their appearance in such large numbers was a source of great delight to the castaways, whom they supplied with eggs, firewood, oil, shoes, and even clothes.

On November 24th the young penguins began to make their appearance.

Fine weather ushered in the 8th of December ; but towards mid-day the wind freshened from the north and the west, accompanied with showers of rain. Between one and two o'clock the look-out man discovered a bark on the north side of the island. She was so close that he could distinctly see her fore and aft stays. A counterpane was soon waving from the flagstaff ; and the little company felt so assured of immediate relief that they began to pack up a few curiosities, to carry them down to the boat when it put ashore. Their disappointment was all the greater when the vessel went on her way, either not seeing or refusing to pay attention to their signals.

On Christmas day died Mr. Walker's child.

The 1st of January completed a half-year of captivity. As in all that time they had seen but three vessels, they were forced to the conclusion that they would have to spend winter on the island. They made their preparations, so far as might be, by laying in a stock of penguins' skins, and also melting down large quantities of fat, which they removed from the entrails and skins of the penguins, and stored up in bird's bladders or penguin-skins.

"We will want the fat," writes Peters, "either for eating or burning in the lamps, as the birds will be far scarcer this winter than they were last. But if we can keep up a good fire—which we can do with plenty of penguins' skins—we will always manage to pick up a bird now and again ; which won't come so hard on us, as we are all in a more healthy condition than we were last winter. On the first day of the year we are divided into seven lots : thirteen living in the hut that I live in, eleven in another, six in another, two in another, and three huts with four in each—making in all forty-four ; which is the half of the crew and passengers that were aboard when the vessel was lost. We are now cooking in all sorts

of articles, only two of the confectionery tins being in fit condition to boil meat in ; and these two, of course, being in the biggest huts,—the other huts having to fry their meat on the sides of the old tins, or in stone frying-pans, which can be picked up on the island after a diligent search. Stone frying-pans are only stones hollowed out so that they will hold a little fat to fry the meat with ; and, of course, we have to find them hollowed out by nature, as we have nothing to hollow them with. As our eggs are all done, we had to look around for another substitute for soap ; which we found in the shape of blood from penguins, or the livers of young penguins. It looks rather strange to see two or three of us going away to the gully to wash. First of all, we go over among the penguins, and stun a few of them by striking them on the heads with our clubs ; then we bleed them by cutting their throats ; and as the blood trickles from them we catch it on bits of rags, which being properly soaked, we run down to the gully ; and after stripping we proceed to wash, by rubbing the blood all over ourselves, and then washing it off with water." Not a very agreeable process.

On the 3rd they commenced the erection of a square tower of turf on the hill-top : first, to attract a passing ship's attention ; and, second, as a kind of shelter for the look-out. The digging of the turf was no light task for men without tools and implements, who were compelled to have recourse to their fingers.

At this time they had stowed away for winter firing about ten thousand penguins' skins, besides about two hundred gallons of fat.

Again, on Friday, the 14th of January, every heart was fluttered by the cry of the look-out man, "Sail, ho !" He had just mounted to his post at daybreak, when he caught sight of a bark under all plain sail standing to the east-

ward. Before many minutes had elapsed he had hoisted a blanket from the flagstaff—almost as strange a signal as that with which Midshipman Easy and O'Brien astonished Captain Sawyer on their return from their adventurous escapade—while a couple of men, waving another blanket, sprang upon the unfinished tower; and everybody stood, with arms outstretched and straining eyes, looking out upon the dull, gray sea. Duller and grayer than ever did it seem when this ship, like her predecessors, passed on and made no sign.

A spell of bad weather prevented them from resuming work upon the tower until the 19th. Then they laboured lustily until it was about fourteen feet six inches square, and between nine and ten feet in height. Being entirely solid, a very large quantity of turf was required as material.

About four o'clock, on the afternoon of the 21st, the ocean-prisoners were all more or less startled by the familiar shout of "Sail, ho!" Everybody was immediately on the *qui vive*—a large fire was lighted—flags fluttered in the wind. Would this ship too—they asked one another—disappoint their hopes, and torture them with an unfulfilled prospect of rescue? At first she bore onward steadily; but all at once she was hauled to the wind, and headed towards the rocky islet. It is impossible to describe the emotions of the little company on the brink of the cliffs, as they witnessed the manœuvre which ensured their happy deliverance.

"As soon," says Peters, "as she came about one mile to the eastward of the island, she backed her mainyards and lowered two boats, to our intense delight. They pulled to the north side of the island, thinking to get a landing there, but found it was impossible to effect it. Our sailmaker asked one of the boats to come as close as it could; which being done, he jumped into the water and was hauled aboard the

boat. As soon as they got him aboard, they pulled round to the other side of the island, where we had at first landed ; but as it was fast getting dark, the captain, who was in one of the boats, told us he would be unable to take any of us off that night ; but directly he knew there was a lady among us, he brought his boat as close as he could safely, and got Mrs. Wordsworth aboard. And being told that her son was on shore, he also took him aboard, besides two invalids and myself ; at the same time putting some bread and pork ashore for those that remained, until he should come back in the morning to take them all off. The captain then gave orders to pull back to the ship,—which we found out to be the American whaler *Young Phoenix*, of New Bedford, Massachusetts ; D. L. Gifford, commander.”

This sea-captain's name deserves to be held in honourable remembrance, as that of one who was not unworthy of his profession. He showed a singular generosity in his treatment of the castaways, behaving with the most refined delicacy and most unselfish liberality.

With the remainder of Mr. Peters' diary we have no cause to meddle, since it does but repeat facts with which the reader has been already brought acquainted. It will be seen that to the wreck of the *Strathmore* we have devoted a very considerable portion of our space, because we felt that it possessed many curious and interesting features, and afforded another illustration of the poet's saying—

“ Truth is strange—
Stranger still than fiction.”

In bringing to a close our stories of ocean peril and adventure, we may be permitted a brief allusion to a calamity which

has occurred while these unpretending pages were passing through the press. Its cause was that lamentable disregard of the "rules of the road" at sea which, of recent years, has grown much too common.

A stout trading-ship, the *Strathclyde*, sailed from London on the 17th of February, bound for Bombay, with twenty-five passengers and a crew of forty-seven persons on board. In the afternoon of the same day the pilot who had carried her down the Thames was landed at Dover, and the good bark went on her way down Channel, with a fair wind, edging outward from the shore in order to gain the open sea. Just as she left the white cliffs of Dover behind, she sighted a large steamship, about two miles astern, and still further out to sea. She appeared to be holding a course down Channel more nearly parallel to the shore, and consequently the two ships were advancing on lines that would cross one another if prolonged. The steamer proved to be the *Franconia*—a German vessel, bound for the West Indies—much larger and faster than the *Strathclyde*, and pursuing a rate of speed which brought her nearer and nearer to the latter. In these circumstances, the rule of the road, by sea as by land, requires that the pursuer, the swifter and the stronger, shall take such measures as will prevent injury to the pursued. There was nothing for the *Strathclyde* but to hold on her course steadily; and she was further justified in doing this by another well-known rule, which enjoins that when two vessels approach each other on the same tack, that which is to "port," or on the left side, shall give way.

Half an hour glided by, and the *Franconia* and *Strathclyde* were so close as to be in evident danger of a collision. The captain of the latter then steered more towards the shore, so that the German vessel might pass in a parallel line, or at worst sheer off from her side on a tangent; and had the *Fran-*

conia then shifted her course in the contrary way, as by all the rules of ocean navigation she was bound to have done, the disastrous consequences might have been greatly mitigated, though collision might still have been inevitable. But the *Franconia* came down upon the *Strathclyde* as if she had been an enemy's vessel in time of war. It is possible her captain calculated on passing under her stern; but the effect of orders given in a hurry, and in a moment of alarm and perplexity, was, that the engines were not reversed in sufficient time to diminish the headway; the course of the *Franconia* was abruptly diverted towards the shore; she swept in upon the unfortunate *Strathclyde*, and struck her twice nearly amidships, rending a huge breach, into which the waters immediately poured, and sank her.

So far, the conduct of Ferdinand Keyn, the captain of the *Franconia*, had been grievously culpable. But worse remains to be told. Having caused the disaster, it might be supposed that he would have hastened to take every possible step to obviate its worst results; that he would have done all he could to rescue the crew and passengers of the vessel destroyed by his carelessness and imprudence. A London journalist, alluding to a wreck described in these pages, remarks that, in the case of the *Deutschland*, severe censures, both in English and German newspapers, were bestowed on the conduct of passing vessels, and especially of the Harwich tug-boat, which avoided or delayed running into a position of great danger for the purpose of immediate rescue. The official inquiry, however, declared these charges to be utterly groundless. It was shown that succour was afforded at the earliest moment when it could be afforded with success. But what shall we say of the *Franconia*? The weather was fine; the sea smooth. She was in no immediate danger; for though her bows were stove in by the force of the collision, her own

people have admitted that she would have floated for upwards of two hours, or for a far longer time than was necessary to reach Dover harbour. She made no effort, however, to rescue the unhappy persons struggling with the waves, or clinging with desperate tenacity to floating pieces of wreck. She made no effort to put out her boats, though they were capable of carrying one hundred persons. But Captain Keyn seems to have fallen a victim to an overmastering panic; a panic aggravated by the cowardly anxiety of an English pilot on board, one James Porter. "He never considered the saving of life from the *Strathclyde*," he said in his evidence; "his own life being as good as those of others; nor did he look to see if the *Strathclyde* sank." Let us hand James Porter's name down to infamy; let us blush to think that he could call himself an Englishman!

A few persons from the *Strathclyde* got on board the *Franconia*, and urged her captain to lower his boats, and lay by for a few brief minutes while an attempt was made to save his victims. But he was deaf to their prayers and suggestions, and steamed away to Dover with all possible speed, leaving the people of the *Strathclyde* to their fate. Some of them were picked up by two small vessels which chanced to be in sight of the catastrophe, though not very near it; the greater number were drowned.

Keyn, the captain of the *Franconia*, was tried at the Central Criminal Court, London, on a charge of manslaughter, and, after a patient investigation, convicted. Thenceforth he lives under a brand. His name will always be used in illustration of the cowardice of intense selfishness. He left men and women to perish miserably, when he might easily have afforded them the means of safety.

The result of the trial, says a recent writer, will at least afford a very necessary warning that the rules of the ocean-

highway are not to be neglected with impunity for the sake of some trivial economy of time.

The calamity we have described, however, occurred in broad daylight, and in defiance of every possible warning. Collisions sometimes occur when prevention is not quite so easy. A great naval disaster, the loss of the *Vanguard*,* was partly caused by deficient fog-signals. For want of them the *Vesuvius*, a large Dutch trader, homeward bound from Odessa, was run down and sunk, on April the 7th, by an English screw-collier, the *Savernake*, which met her on the opposite tack, near Hastings. The sea-haze was darkened by the smoke-clouds from the collier's funnel, carried by a light easterly breeze in the direction of the vessel's course. Neither ship knew anything of the other's proximity until the moment of collision. Both crews had just time to realize its imminency—and all was over ! The *Vesuvius* went down about five miles from the shore. But her crew of thirty-two persons was not left to perish. Although her bows were shattered, and she could be kept afloat only by dint of incessant labour at the pumps, the collier remained on the spot until every soul was saved. Then she steered straight for the shore, and ran upon the open Sussex beach. What a contrast to the pitiful story of the *Franconia* !

* An ironclad man-of-war, run down by a sister-ship, the *Iron Duke*, on a foggy night, off the Irish coast.

A Brief Nautical Glossary,

IN EXPLANATION OF TERMS USED IN THE PRECEDING PAGES.

Aback, the position of a ship's sail when its forward surface is pressed upon by the wind.

Abaft, the hinder part of a ship, or some point nearer the stern than another given part; as, "abaft the foremast."

Abeam, or **abreast**, the point at right angles with the vessel's mainmast.

Aboard, the inside of a ship. But to *fall aboard* is to strike against another ship. To *haul aboard* the maintack, is to bring the clew (or rope) of the mainsail down to the chess-tree.

About, a ship's position just after she has tacked, or changed her course.

Adrift, a vessel's condition when she has broken loose from her moorings, and is driven about at the mercy of wind and wave.

Afore, that part of a ship which lies forward, or near the stem.

Aft, **after**, behind; near the vessel's stern.

Aloft, up in the tops, at the masthead, or anywhere about the yards or rigging.

Amidships, the middle of the ship, either as regards her length or breadth. Thus, "she struck her amidships"—*i.e.*, between stem and stern; or, "put the helm amidships"—*i.e.*, in the middle, between port and starboard.

Anchors: "best bower," and "small bower," the two stowed furthest forward; the "best" being on the starboard bow, and the "small" on the larboard. The "sheet anchor" is of the same size and weight as either of the bowers; "stream anchor" is smaller, and "kedg anchor" smallest of all.

Astern, behind the ship.

Athwart hawse, the situation of a ship when she is driven by wind, tide, or accident of any kind, across the stern of another, whether they bear against or are at a small distance from each other.

Bar, a shoal across the mouth of a harbour or river.

- Barricade**, or **bulwark**, the wooden parapet on each side of the forecastle, quarter-deck, or poop.
- Bear up**, or **bear away**, to change the course of a ship so that she may run before the wind, after she has sailed some time with a side wind, or "close hauled." The term apparently refers to the motion of the helm, which is then "borne up" to windward, or to the weather side of the ship.
- Bearing**, the point of the compass on which any object bears, or the situation of any object in reference to any given part of the ship.
- Beating**, to progress against the wind in a zigzag line.
- Belay**, to make fast.
- Bend**, to fasten the sails to the yard, or the cable to the anchor.
- Berth**, the place where a ship lies; or a cabin.
- Bight**, any part of a rope between the ends, or a collar or an eye formed by it.
- Binnacle**, the box containing the compass.
- Bow**, the rounding part of a ship's side forward, beginning where the planks arch inwards, and terminating where they close at the stem, or prow.
- Bowlines**, ropes by which the leeches, or sides of the sails, are pulled forward.
- Braces**, ropes fastened to the yard-arms to brace them about.
- Bring-to**, to arrest a ship's course by so arranging the sails as to make them counteract each other. As she is then nearly stationary, she is said to "lie-by," or "lie-to." To **come-to** has much the same meaning.
- Broach-to**, when a violent wind, or a heavy sea, on the quarter forces the ship to windward of her course in defiance of the helm.
- Bulkheads**, partitions of the cabins.
- Cable's length**, 120 fathoms, or 240 yards.
- Cathead**, a strong projection on each bow, furnished with sheaves or strong pulleys, to which the anchor is lifted after being raised to the bow by the capstan.
- Chains**, or **channels**, projections from the sides—below the quarter-deck and forecastle ports in large ships, but above the guns in small ones—to which the shrouds or rigging of the lower masts are secured by means of wooden blocks, or *dead eyes*, strongly chained and bolted to the ship's side.
- Chess-tree**, a piece of wood bolted perpendicularly on each side of the ship near the gangway, to confine the clew of the mainsail.
- Close-hauled**, the trim of a ship's sails when she seeks to advance in the nearest possible direction towards that point of the compass from which the wind blows.
- Club-hauling**, tacking by means of an anchor.
- Davit**, a piece of timber used as a crane to hoist the flukes of an anchor, or for raising and lowering a boat.
- Fore-and-aft**, from stem to stern.

Forging ahead, carried forward by the wind.

Furl, to roll or wrap a sail close to the yard, stay, or mast to which it belongs; a gasket, or cord, being used to fasten it.

Gasket, the piece of cord with which a sail is fastened to the yard.

Haul the wind, to direct the ship's course as near as possible to that point of the compass from which the wind blows.

Hawse, a term generally explained to mean the situation of the cables before the ship's stem, when she is moored with two anchors out from the bows—one on the starboard, the other on the larboard. It signifies also any small distance ahead of a ship, or between her head and the anchors by which she rides.

Hawser, a small cable.

Heave-to, *see bring-to*. *Heaving-to* an anchor, is when all the cable is hauled in until the ship is directly over her anchor, preparatory to its being weighed.

Larboard, the left side of the ship, when you are standing at the stern and looking forward.

Luff, the order to the helmsman to put the tiller towards the lee-side of the ship, so that she may sail nearer to the wind.

Main sheet, a large rope attached to the lower corner, or clew, of the mainsail, by which, when set, it is hauled aft into its place. Allan Cunningham's famous line, "A wet sheet and a flowing sea," is nonsense. The poet evidently thought that "sheet" meant *sail*; whereas, on board ship, it always means *rope*.

Main tack, another large rope fixed to the same corner of the sail, but meant to haul it on board or down to the chess-tree on the fore part of the gangway; when set upon a wind, or "close hauled," the foresail is provided with "sheet" and "tack" also.

Offing, out at sea, or at a considerable distance from the shore. We speak of "watching a vessel in the offing."

Pay round off, is, when the ship is near the wind, to fall off from it against the helm, in spite of every effort to prevent it.

Port the helm, the opposite to *luff*. To *port the helm* is to put it over to the *larboard* side of the ship. Used instead of *larboard*, because of the too close similarity of the latter word, in sound, to *starboard*.

Quarter, that part of a vessel's side which lies towards the stern, or is included between the aftmost end of the main chains and the side of the stern, where it is terminated by the quarter pieces.

Rake, the inclination of the masts, bowsprit, &c.; hence the expression, "a rakish-looking schooner." To *rake* a ship is to sweep its decks, fore and aft, with a broadside from a vessel lying either athwart her bows or her stern.

Reef, to take in or reduce a sail by tying a portion of it to the yards.

Slipping the cable, unsplicing it within; a buoy, with a buoy rope, having been previously attached to it, to show where the anchor has been left.

Splicing, the mode by which the broken strands of a rope are united.

Spring, to anchor with a, is, before letting go the anchor, to cause a small cable, or hawser, to be passed out of the stern or quarter-port, and taken outside of the ship forward, in order to be bent or fastened to the ring of the said anchor, with the view of bringing the vessel's broadside to bear in any given direction.

Squadron, an assemblage of ships-of-war in number less than ten.

Starboard, the opposite to *larboard*; that is, the right side of the ship when looking forward from the stern.

Stay. "To stay a ship," is so to order the sails and direct the helm as to bring the ship's head towards the quarter from which the wind blows, in order to get her on the other tack. If she does not answer helm, she is said to be "in stays." Certain sails chiefly used in this manœuvre are known as "stay-sails;" thus, main stay-sails, main topmast stay-sail, maintop-gallant stay-sail, and main-royal stay-sail. Also, fore-topmast stay-sail, fore stay-sail, and foretop-gallant stay-sail.

Tack, to change the course from one board to another. To change the ship about from the starboard to the larboard tack, or from the larboard to the starboard, so as to profit by a contrary wind.

Taut or **taunt rigged**, means when a ship is very lofty in her masts. All-a-tauto is used when a ship, having had some of her masts struck has rehoisted them.

Taut, a corruption of "tight."

Wake, immediately behind, or in the track of a ship.

Warp, to change a ship's position by hauling her from one part of a harbour, &c., to some other, by means of warps (ropes, or hawsers), attached to buoys, to anchors sunk in the bottom, to other ships, or to certain stations on the shore. The warps are worked either by hand or by the application of some purchase, such as a tackle, windlass, or capstan.

Way. A ship is said to be "under way," or "to have way upon her," when, having weighed her anchor, she is exposed to the influence of the tide, wind, or current.

Weather a ship, is to sail to windward of it. If a ship gets to windward of another, it is said to have secured the "weather-gage."

Wear (or **veer**) **ship**, is to change her course from one board to another by turning her *stern* to windward.

Weigh, to heave up the anchor.

Table of Wrecks.

- Abercrombie**, transport, lost in Table Bay, August 28, 1842.
- Abergavenny**, East Indiaman, lost on the Bill of Portland; upwards of 300 persons perished; February 6, 1805.
- Acorn**, sloop, 18 guns, lost on the Halifax station; all on board (115) perished; April 14, 1828.
- Active**, West Indiaman, in Margate Roads, January 10, 1803.
- Admella**, steamer, between Melbourne and Adelaide, wrecked on a reef; 23 persons saved out of 72; August 6, 1859.
- Æneas**, transport, on the coast of Newfoundland; 340 persons perished; on the night of October 23, 1805.
- Ajax**, 74 guns, destroyed by fire off the Island of Tenedos; 250 persons perished; February 14, 1807.
- Alceste**, 46 guns, off Island of Pulo Laut, in the China Seas, February 18, 1817.
- Alert**, Dublin and Liverpool packet, in the Irish Sea; 70 lives lost; March 26, 1823.
- Algerine**, 10 guns, foundered in a squall in the Mediterranean; all on board (75) perished; January 9, 1826.
- All Serene**, Australian clipper, foundered during a gale in the Pacific; 30 lives or more lost; February 21, 1864.
- Amazon**, West India mail-steamer, destroyed by fire in the Bay of Biscay; 104 persons perished; January 4, 1852.
- Amphion**, 32 guns, accidentally blew up in Hamouze Harbour, Plymouth; nearly all the crew (215) perished; September 22, 1796.
- Amphitrite**, convict-ship, lost on Boulogne Sands; out of 131 persons, only 3 were saved; August 31, 1833.
- Andromeda**, 28 guns, destroyed in a terrible tempest in the West Indies, in October 1780.
- Anglo-Saxon**, mail-steamer, wrecked off Cape Race, Newfoundland; out of 446 persons on board, 237 perished; April 27, 1863.
- Annie Jane**, of Liverpool, emigrant-ship, ran ashore on the Barra Islands, on the west coast of Scotland; 348 lives lost; September 29, 1853.
- Anson**, 40 guns, on sand-bank off Helstone, near Falmouth; 60 lives lost; December 29, 1807.
- Antelope**, Captain Wilson, wrecked off the Pellew Islands, August 9, 1803. [All were saved; and, landing on Pellew Island, they formed a regular encampment; lived on friendly terms with the natives; built a boat to carry them to China; and, by desire of the king, took with them his eldest son, Prince Lee Boo, who afterwards died in England of smallpox.]
- Apollo**, 36 guns, off Cape Mondego; her captain and 60 men perished; April 2, 1804.

- Arab**, sloop, 18 guns, wrecked near Belmullet, Westport; all on board (100) perished; December 12, 1823.
- Ardent**, 64 guns, blown up off Corsica; all hands (500) perished; in April 1794.
- Ariel**, in the Persian Gulf; 79 lives lost; March 18, 1820.
- Ariel**, 6 guns, lost between Falmouth and Halifax; all on board perished; month and day unknown, 1829.
- Association**, 70 guns, wrecked among the Scilly Isles, on October 22, 1707.
- Astræa**, 32 guns, on a reef, Island of Anegada, West Indies; 4 persons perished; March 23, 1808.
- Astrolabe**, frigate, wrecked on Vanikoro Island, 1788.
- Atalante**, frigate, wrecked on the Sister Rocks, Sambro Island, November 10, 1813.
- Athenienne**, 64 guns, wrecked on the Esyuerques, near Cape Bon, October 20, 1806; 350 persons perished.
- Atlantic**, steamer, between Liverpool and New York, wrecked near Meagher's Island; out of 931 persons on board, 481 were lost; April 1, 1873.
- Auralia**, trader, from London to Liverpool, wrecked on the Herne Sand, February 26, 1841.
- Aurora**, transport, on the Goodwin Sands; 300 lives lost; December 21, 1805.
- Aurora**, trader, from New York to Hull, foundered; 25 persons perished; May 20, 1853.
- Austria**, emigrant-ship, destroyed by fire in the midst of the Atlantic; out of 538 persons, only 67 were saved; September 13, 1858.
- Avenger**, steam-frigate, on the Sorelles, Mediterranean; only 4 lives saved out of 250; December 20, 1847.
- Aventure**, schooner, on the Crozet Islands, July 1826.
- Babet**, 24 guns, foundered in the West Indies; all hands (155) lost; some time in the year 1801.
- Bangalore**, East Indiaman, lost in the Indian Sea, April 12, 1802.
- Banterer**, 22 guns, lost in the River St. Lawrence, October 29, 1808.
- Barbadoes**, 14 guns, destroyed in a terrible tempest in the West Indies, in October 1780.
- Belette**, 18 guns, wrecked off the island of Lessee, in the Kattegat; 116 lives lost out of 121; November 24, 1812.
- Bencoolen**, East Indiaman, went ashore near Bude Haven in Cornwall; 26 lives lost; October 19, 1862.
- Birkenhead**, troop-ship, off Point Danger, Cape of Good Hope; out of 638 persons, only 184 were saved; February 25, 1852.
- Blanche**, 38 guns, lost off Ushant; out of 284 persons, 45 were drowned; March 4, 1807.
- Blendon Hall**, merchantman, on Inaccessible Island, July 23, 1821.
- Blenheim**, 74 guns, Admiral Sir Thomas Troubridge, foundered near the Island of Rodriguez, in the Indian Ocean, February 1, 1807, or about that date.
- Blervie Castle**, bound for Adelaide, lost in the Channel; all on board perished; about December 25, 1859.
- Boadicea**, transport, lost near Kinsale, January 31, 1816.
- Bombay**, screw line-of-battle ship, destroyed by fire near Flores Island, off the coast of South America; 89 lives lost; December 14, 1864.
- Boreas**, 28 guns, on the Hannonis Rocks, Guernsey; 127 persons perished; November 21, 1807.
- Borysthenes**, steam-packet, wrecked on a reef near Oran; 70 lives lost; December 15, 1865.
- Boussole**, frigate, wrecked on Vanikoro Island, 1788.
- Boyne**, 98 guns, burned at Spithead, May 1, 1795.
- Braak**, 14 guns, foundered in the Delaware; 35 lives lost; May 23, 1798.

British Queen, packet from Ostend to Margate, on the Goodwin Sands, December 17, 1814.

Busy, 18 guns, foundered in the North Atlantic, with all on board (121); some time in 1807.

Calypso, 16 guns, foundered in a gale, on her voyage home from Jamaica; all on board (121) lost; in August 1803.

Calypso, packet, lost on her way from Halifax to England, with all on board (30); in the course of the year 1833.

Cameleon, 14 guns, destroyed in a terrible tempest in the West Indies, in October 1780.

Canadian, steamer, wrecked on an iceberg in the Strait of Belleisle; 35 lives lost; June 4, 1861.

Captain, turret-ironclad, capsized and foundered off Cape Finisterre, in Spain; out of her crew of nearly 500, only 17 escaped; September 7, 1870.

Carrick, brig, caught in a gale, and foundered, in the River St. Lawrence; 170 emigrants perished; May 19, 1847.

Catherine, trader, blown up off the Isle of Pines; most of the crew were massacred by the natives, or afterwards drowned; April 12, 1843.

Cato, 50 guns, Admiral Sir Hyde Parker, wrecked on the Malabar coast, November 5, 1783.

Centaur, 74 guns, foundered on her way home from Jamaica; Captain Inglefield and 11 of the crew saved; September 21, 1782.

Central America, steamer, lost on her way from Havannah to New York, September 1847.

Chance, sloop, 14 guns, foundered; 116 persons lost, out of a crew of 121; October 9, 1800.

Charlemont, mail-packet, running between Holyhead and Dublin; 104 persons drowned; December 22, 1790.

Chusan, steamer, wrecked on the Crinan Rock, at the entrance to Ardrossan Harbour, October 21, 1874.

Circe, frigate, 32 guns, lost on the Yarmouth coast, November 16, 1803.

City of Glasgow, a Glasgow steamer, with 480 persons on board, was never heard of after November 1854.

Clinker, sloop, 14 guns, sunk in a cruise off Havre, with all on board (50); in December 1806.

Colchester, 50 guns, wrecked on the Kentish Knock; 40 men drowned; September 21, 1744.

Conflict, brig, 10 guns, lost, with all her crew (50), in the Bay of Biscay; November 9, 1810.

Conqueror, ship-of-war, on St. Nicholas's Island, Plymouth, during the storm of February 15, 1760.

Contest, 12 guns, lost, with all on board (50), on the Halifax station; April 14, 1828.

Cormorant, 16 guns, burned, and blown up by accident, at Port-au-Prince, St. Domingo; 95 persons perished, out of 121; December 24, 1796.

Coronation, 90 guns, foundered off the Ramhead, September 1, 1691.

Cospatrick, emigrant-ship, burned, November 18, 1874; 470 lives lost.

Courageux, 74 guns, wrecked at Apes Hill, on the Barbary coast; 440 lives lost; December 18, 1796.

Crescent, 36 guns, wrecked off coast of Jutland; 230 lives lost; December 5, 1808.

Cumberland, mail-packet, wrecked on the coast of Antigua, September 4, 1804.

Curlew, sloop, foundered in the North Sea; all on board (90) perished; December 31, 1796.

Cygnets, sloop, lost off the Cornantine river, with her crew of 121; some time in 1815.

Dædalus, 38 guns, wrecked on the Barres, Island of Ceylon, July 2, 1813.

- Dalhousie**, foundered off Beachy Head; 60 persons perished; October 19, 1853.
- Deal Castle**, 24 guns, destroyed in a terrible tempest in the West Indies, in October 1780.
- Defence**, 74 guns, wrecked off the coast of Jutland; 587 lost, out of a crew of 593; December 24, 1811.
- Defiance**, 64 guns, destroyed in a terrible tempest in the West Indies, in October 1780.
- Delight**, sloop, 16 guns, wrecked on the coast of Calabria; all hands (95) lost; January 31, 1808.
- Delight**, 10 guns, foundered in a hurricane at the Mauritius; all on board (75) perished; February 23, 1824.
- Deutschland**, screw-steamer, off Harwich, December 1875.
- Dominica**, brig, 10 guns, foundered near Tortola; 62 lives lost, out of 65; August 1809.
- Doris**, frigate, wrecked on the Diamond Rock, Quiberon Bay, January 12, 1805.
- Doris**, schooner, foundered in the roadstead of Brest; out of a crew of 67, 31 were lost; September 19, 1845.
- Drake**, sloop, off the coast of Newfoundland, June 1822.
- Duc d'Aquitaine**, 14 guns, wrecked off Pondicherry, January 1, 1761.
- Dunbar**, clipper, cast on the rocks near Sydney; out of 122 persons on board, only 1 saved; August 20, 1857.
- Duroc**, steam-packet, wrecked on the Mellish Reef, August 13, 1856.
- Eagle**, wrecked among the Scilly Isles, on October 22, 1707.
- Eagle Speed**, emigrant-ship, foundered near Calcutta; 265 coolies perished; August 24, 1865.
- Earl of Eldon**, merchant-vessel, destroyed by fire in the Indian Ocean; all on board saved; September 27, 1834.
- Earl of Moira**, merchantman, on the Burbo Bank, near Liverpool; 40 lives lost; August 8, 1841.
- Earl of Wemyss**, packet, off the Norfolk shore, near Wells; 11 ladies and children drowned; July 13, 1833.
- Edgar**, 70 guns, blew up at Spithead, October 15, 1711.
- Edmund**, emigrant-ship, from Limerick to New York, wrecked off the western coast of Ireland; upwards of 100 lives lost; November 12, 1850.
- Endymion**, sailing-ship, burned in the Mersey, January 31, 1860.
- Ethalion**, 38 guns, wrecked on the Penmarks, December 24, 1799.
- Evening Star**, steamer, foundered in a gale, on her voyage from New York to New Orleans; out of 278 persons on board, only 24 were saved; October 2, 1866.
- Exmouth**, emigrant-ship, from Londonderry to Quebec; out of 240 persons on board, nearly all were lost; April 28, 1847.
- Experiment**, trader, from Hull to Quebec, wrecked near Calais, April 15, 1832.
- Fairy**, surveying-ship, lost off the coast of Norfolk, November 13, 1840.
- Favourite**, trader, from Bremen to Baltimore, came into collision off the Start with the American merchant-vessel *Hesper*, and sunk; 201 persons were drowned; April 29, 1854.
- Felix**, 12 guns, wrecked near Santander; 79 persons lost; January 22, 1807.
- Firebrand**, wrecked among the Scilly Isles, on October 22, 1707.
- Firefly**, schooner, on a reef near Belize, February 27, 1835.
- Flora**, 36 guns, struck on the Schelling Reef; 9 lives lost; January 18, 1808.
- Fly**, sloop, foundered off the coast of Newfoundland, and all on board (121) perished; in January 1802.
- Forfarshire**, steamer, from Hull to Dundee, wrecked on the Farne Islands; 38 persons perished; September 6, 1838.
- Forth**, West India mail-steamer, wrecked on a reef in the Gulf of Mexico, January 13, 1849.

Foxhound, 18 guns, foundered on her return from Halifax, with all on board (121 persons). August 31, 1809.

Frith, passage-boat, in the Strait of Dornoch; 40 lives lost; August 13, 1809.

Fury, Polar exploring vessel, lost in Regent's Inlet, August 11, 1825.

Ganges, East Indiaman, off the Cape of Good Hope, May 29, 1807.

General Barker, East Indiaman, wrecked off Schwelung, February 17, 1781.

George Canning, steam-packet, between Hamburg and New York, wrecked near the mouth of the Elbe; 96 lives lost; January 1, 1855.

Glasgow, mail-packet, off Farne Islands, November 17, 1806.

Glorieux, 74 guns, lost in a storm shortly after Rodney's victory, October 5, 1782.

Governor Fenner, merchantman, run down off Holyhead by the *Nottingham* steamer; 122 persons perished; February 19, 1841.

Grappler, gun-brig, off the Island of Chaussey, December 30, 1803.

Griper, 10 guns, lost off Ostend, with all hands (50), February 13, 1807.

Grosvenor, East Indiaman, wrecked on the coast of Caffraria, August 4, 1782.

Halswell, East Indiaman; 100 persons perished; January 6, 1786.

Harmony, merchant-vessel, sunk off Plymouth, with all hands, February 27, 1862.

Harpooner, transport, near Newfoundland; 100 persons perished; November 10, 1816.

Harrier, 18 guns, foundered in the East Indian seas; all on board (121) perished; in 1809.

Hartwell, East Indiaman; May 24, 1787.

Harwich, 70 guns, ran ashore at Mount Edgecumbe, September 1, 1691.

Hawke, 14 guns, foundered in the Channel; all on board (96) lost; in May 1805.

Hemeux, 24 guns, foundered on her voyage from Jamaica to Halifax; all on board (155) perished; in 1806.

Henri IV., line-of-battle ship, wrecked in the Black Sea, November 13, 1854.

Hero, 74 guns, lost off the coast of Jutland; only 18 lives saved; December 24, 1811.

Hindustan, East Indiaman, wrecked on the Culvers, Isle of Wight, January 11, 1803.

Hindustan, 64 guns, a store-ship, with 259 persons on board, destroyed by fire, off Cape St. Sebastian; all saved but 5; April 2, 1804.

Hirondelle, 16 guns, ran aground near Cape Bon; only 4 saved; February 23, 1803.

Hungarian, mail-steamer, wrecked off the coast of Nova Scotia; all on board (205 persons) lost; in the night of February 19-20, 1860.

Impétueux, 74 guns, burned at Portsmouth, August 24, 1792.

Impregnable, 98 guns, wrecked near Langstone Harbour, on the coast of Hampshire, October 19, 1799.

Independence, trader, wrecked and burned on the coast of Lower California; 140 persons perished; February 16, 1853.

Indian, mail-steamer, wrecked off the coast of Newfoundland; 27 lives lost; November 21, 1859.

Invincible, 74 guns, wrecked on Hammond's Knowl, near Yarmouth; out of a crew of 590, 400 were lost; March 16, 1801.

Isabella, from London to Quebec, wrecked by an iceberg, May 9, 1841.

Janet Boyd, bark, wrecked in a storm off Margate Sands; 23 lives lost; January 20, 1855.

Japan, Pacific mail-steamer, destroyed by fire; 391 lives lost; December 1873.

Jasper, 10 guns, lost on the rocks under Mount Batten, in Plymouth Harbour; only 2 saved out of a crew of 67; January 20, 1817.

Java, 32 guns, Captain George Pigot, foundered near the Island of Rodriguez, in the Indian Ocean, February 1, 1807. or about that date.

John, emigrant-ship, wrecked on the Munches Rock, off Falmouth; 200 persons perished; May 1, 1855.

John Baptist, trader, in the latitude of the Azores, March 17, 1867.

John Rutledge, from Liverpool to New York, wrecked on an iceberg, February 20, 1856.

Josephine Willis, packet-ship, came into collision with the screw-steamer *Man-ger-ton*, in the English Channel; 70 lives lost; February 3, 1856.

Julia, brig, lost off Tristan d'Acunha, on the coast of Africa; out of a crew of 95, 55 were lost; October 2, 1817.

Juliana, East Indiaman, on the Kentish Knock; 40 lives lost; December 26, 1821.

Kent, East Indiaman, destroyed by fire in the Atlantic; 96 persons perished; March 1, 1825.

King George, Irish mail-packet, lost on the Hoyle Bank; 125 persons perished; September 21, 1806.

La Blanche, 32 guns, destroyed in a terrible tempest in the West Indies, in October 1780.

La Déterminée, 24 guns, lost in Jersey Roads, March 26, 1803.

Lady Hobart, mail-packet, wrecked on an iceberg, June 29, 1802.

Lady Munro, from Calcutta to Sydney; out of 90 persons on board, only 20 were saved; January 9, 1834.

Lady Nugent, troop-ship, homeward bound from Madras, foundered in a hurricane, with 400 officers, crew, and soldiers on board; in May 1854.

Lady Sherbrooke, trader, from Londonderry to Quebec, lost near Cape Ray; out of 295 persons on board, only 32 were saved; August 19, 1831.

La Plata, steamer, foundered in Bay of Biscay; November 29, 1874; 58 lives lost.

Laurel, 28 guns, destroyed in a terrible tempest in the West Indies, October 1780.

Leda, 38 guns, capsized in a violent storm, in lat. 38° 8', long. 17° 40'; out of a crew of 264 men, only 7 were saved; December 11, 1796.

Lichfield, 50 guns, wrecked on the Barbary coast; 130 persons perished; November 29, 1758.

Lifeguard, steamer, left Newcastle with 41 passengers; never since heard of; supposed to have foundered off Flamborough Head; December 20, 1862.

London, steamer, foundered in Bay of Biscay; 250 lives lost; January 11, 1866.

Lord Castlereagh, East Indiaman, lost off Bombay, with most of the crew and passengers; June 17, 1840.

Lord Melville, transport, lost near Kinsale, January 31, 1816.

Lord William Bentinck, East Indiaman, lost off Bombay, with most of the crew and passengers; June 17, 1840.

Litune, 36 guns, wrecked off the Vlié Island; all but 2 persons perished; October 9, 1799.

Magicienne, 36 guns, wrecked in an engagement with the French, off the Mauritius, August 23, 1810.

Magnet, 16 guns, foundered near Halifax; all on board (95) were lost; in 1812.

Magpie, schooner, 3 guns, lost in Colorados Roads, Cuba; 2 saved out of a crew of 35; August 27, 1826.

Manchester, steamer, from Hull to Hamburg, wrecked off the Vogel Sands, near Cuxhaven; about 30 lives lost; June 16, 1844.

Manilla, 38 guns, on the Haak Bank, Texel; 8 lives lost; January 28, 1812.

Maria, 10 guns, foundered in West Indies, and all on board (50) perished; in 1807.*

* These 10-gun brigs, built during our war with Napoleon, were almost all unfit for sea, and a large number of them foundered, involving a terrible loss of life. From their tendency to turn bottom upwards, they were called "turtles."

- Marne**, corvette, wrecked on the coast of Algeria; 52 lives lost; January 25, 1841.
- Mars**, Waterford steamer, wrecked near Milford Haven; 50 lives lost; April 1, 1862.
- Marshall**, screw-steamer, ran into the bark *Woodhouse*, in the North Sea; 48 persons lost their lives; November 28, 1853.
- Martin**, sloop, 16 guns, foundered in the North Sea; all on board (76) perished; October 1800.*
- Martin**, sloop, 18 guns, foundered on her way out to Barbadoes; all on board (121) perished; in 1806.*
- Martin**, 20 guns, foundered in the East Indies; all on board (150) perished; in 1826.
- Mary**, 70 guns, lost during the terrible storm of November 26, 1703.
- Mary Rose**, 60 guns, foundered off Spithead, July 20, 1544.
- Mastiff**, gun-brig, wrecked on the Cockle Sands, January 19, 1800.
- Medusa**, frigate, wrecked on the Arguin Bank, coast of Africa, July 1816.
- Megæra**, Government store-ship, driven ashore in a sinking state on the barren island of St. Paul; no lives lost; June 18, 1871.
- Minotaur**, 74 guns, wrecked on the North Haak Bank, off the mouth of the Texel; out of a crew of 640, 400 perished; December 22, 1810.
- Morna**, steamer, wrecked on rocks near the Isle of Man; 21 lives lost; February 25, 1855.
- Moucheron**, 18 guns, foundered in the Mediterranean; all on board (121) perished; in 1807.*
- Mutine**, sloop, on a reef near Palestrina, in the Adriatic, December 21, 1848.
- Naias**, transport, on the coast of Newfoundland; October 23, 1805.
- Namur**, 74 guns, foundered near Fort St. David, East Indies; 26 persons saved; April 13, 1749.
- Nassau**, 64 guns, wrecked on the Haak Bank, with a loss of 100 lives, October 25, 1799.
- Nautilus**, East Indiaman, on the Ladrone Islands, November 18, 1803.
- Nautilus**, sloop, on the coast of the Island of Cerigotto, January 5, 1807; 64 persons were saved, after enduring the most terrible sufferings, and being reduced to feed on human flesh.
- Neptune**, brig, capsized in the Mediterranean; out of a crew of 8, only 1 saved; December 24, 1821.
- Netley**, schooner, lost on the Leeward Island station, West Indies; 56 lost, out of a crew of 65; July 10, 1808.
- Newcastle**, 60 guns, foundered at Spithead; 193 drowned; November 26, 1703.
- New Horn**, destroyed by fire in the Strait of Malacca, November 17, 1619.
- Newry**, bound from Newry to Quebec, wrecked near Bardsy; 40 persons drowned; April 16, 1830.
- Nile**, iron screw-steamer, wrecked on the Godevry Rock, in St. Ives Bay; all on board were lost; November 30, 1854.
- Ninrod**, steamer, wrecked near St. David's Head; 40 lives lost; February 28, 1860.
- Normandy**, steam-packet, sunk by collision with a steamer off the Isle of Wight; 34 lives lost; March 17, 1870.
- Northerner**, steamer, wrecked on a rock near Cape Mendorius, on the North Pacific coast of North America; January 6, 1860.
- Northfleet**, Australian emigrant-ship, run into and sunk off Dungeness by a foreign screw-steamer; out of 379 persons on board, 293 perished; January 22, 1873.
- Northumberland**, 70 guns, lost on the Goodwin Sands, November 26, 1703.
- Nubry**, merchantman, wrecked near Bardoy; about 40 lives lost; April 16, 1830.
- Nymph**, 36 guns, wrecked off Dunbar, December 18, 1810.

* The fatality attending the 10-gun brigs, to which we have alluded, also attended the 16-gun and 18-gun sloops, as this record plainly shows.

- Ocean Monarch**, emigrant-ship, from Liverpool to Boston, destroyed by fire within six miles of Great Orme's Head, Lancashire; 156 persons were rescued by the Brazilian steam-frigate *Alphonso* and the yacht *Queen of the Ocean*, 62 escaped by various means, and 178 perished; August 24, 1848.
- Ondine**, steamer, sunk by the *Heroïne*, of Bideford, off Beachy Head; about 51 lives lost; February 19, 1860.
- Orestro**, 16 guns, foundered in a hurricane in the Indian Ocean; all on board (121) perished; in 1799.
- Orion**, steamer, from Liverpool to Glasgow, struck on a sunken rock, close in-shore, to the northward of Portpatrick; and of 200 passengers upwards of 50 were drowned; June 18, 1850.
- Orpheus**, H. M. screw-steamer, wrecked on Manakau Bar, on the west coast of New Zealand; out of 260 persons on board, 70 were saved; February 7, 1863.
- Pacific**, Collins' steamer on the Liverpool and New York line; set out from Liverpool with 186 persons on board, and was never afterwards heard of; January 23, 1856.
- Pallas**, 32 guns, wrecked off Dunbar, December 18, 1810.
- Pandora**, frigate, wrecked, with a loss of 100 lives, August 28, 1791.
- Pandora**, 18 guns, wrecked on the Skaw Reef, in the Kattegat; out of a crew of 121 persons, 29 perished; May 13, 1811.
- Papillion**, 18 guns, foundered on the Jamaica station; all the crew (121) lost; in 1806.
- Papin**, steam-corvette, wrecked on the coast of Morocco, December 7, 1845.
- Parangon**, bound for North Shields, wrecked on the coast of France; out of a crew of 11, only 2 saved; September 14, 1869.
- Peacock**, 18 guns, lost off the southern coast of the United States; all on board (121) perished; in August 1814.
- Pegasus**, Hull and Leith steamer, wrecked on Holy Island; 44 lives lost; July 19, 1843.
- Pembroke**, 60 guns, lost near Porto Novo; 330 persons drowned; April 13, 1749.
- Penelope**, 24 guns, destroyed in a terrible tempest in the West Indies, in October 1780.
- Penelope**, troop-ship, 36 guns, to the east of Magdalen River, Lower Canada, April 30, 1815.
- Persian**, 18 guns, on the Silver Keys, San Domingo, June 23, 1816.
- Phoenix**, 44 guns, destroyed in a terrible tempest in the West Indies, in October 1780.
- Pluto**, steam-corvette, wrecked in the Black Sea, November 13, 1854.
- President**, steamer, on the Liverpool and New York line; on the 13th of March encountered a terrible gale, and foundered; no trace of her has ever been discovered; March 13, 1841.
- Primrose**, 18 guns, lost on the Manacle Rocks, near Falmouth; 1 person saved, out of a crew of 121; January 22, 1809.
- Prince**, merchantman, destroyed by fire in the Atlantic; nearly 300 lives lost; July 26, 1752.
- Prince**, Government steamer, lost in the Black Sea; 144 persons perished; also eleven transports, wrecked in the same storm, and 340 lives lost; November 13 to 16, 1854.
- Prince George**, 80 guns, destroyed by fire, in lat. 48° N., on her way to Gibraltar; 400 perished; April 13, 1758.
- Prince of Wales**, packet, on Dunbary Point, near Dublin; many lives lost; November 19, 1807.
- Princess Mary**, packet, in Deadman's Bay, Plymouth; 6 lives lost; January 20, 1817.
- Proserpine**, 28 guns, wrecked in the mouth of the Elbe, with a loss of 15 lives, February 1, 1799.

- Protector**, East Indiaman, lost off the Bengal coast; out of 178 persons, only 8 escaped; November 21, 1838.
- Queen**, transport-ship, wrecked on Trefusis Point, with a loss of 369 souls, January 14, 1800.
- Queen**, West Indiaman, destroyed by fire off the coast of Brazil, July 9, 1800.
- Queen Charlotte**, 110 guns, destroyed by fire off Leghorn; out of a crew of 859, 673 were lost; March 17, 1800.
- Queen Charlotte**, East Indiaman, off Madras, October 24, 1818.
- Queen of the South**, lost in the estuary of the Loire; out of 42 persons on board, only 4 were saved; April 24, 1868.
- Queen Victoria**, steamer, bound for Liverpool, lost in a snow-storm off the Bailey lighthouse, near Dublin; out of 120 persons on board, 67 perished; February 15, 1853.
- Railleur**, 14 guns, foundered in the Channel; all hands (76) were lost; May 16, 1800.
- Raisonné**, 64 guns, destroyed during the attack upon the Island of Martinique, February 3, 1762.
- Raleigh**, 50 guns, wrecked on the south-east coast of Macao, April 14, 1857.
- Ramilies**, 90 guns, wrecked on the Bolt Head; 26 persons saved; February 15, 1760.
- Recruit**, 10-gun brig, supposed to have foundered in a hurricane off Bermuda; all hands (56) lost; in 1832.
- Redwing**, 18 guns, foundered, it is supposed, near Mataceney, on the coast of Africa; all on board (125) lost; in 1827.
- Regular**, East Indiaman, sunk in lat. $37^{\circ} 23' S.$, and long. $38^{\circ} 13' E.$, May 13, 1843.
- Reliance**, East Indiaman, homeward bound, wrecked off Merlemont, near Boulogne; of 116 persons, 7 only were saved; November 13, 1842.
- Repulse**, 32 guns, foundered off Bermuda; crew perished; in 1755.
- Repulse**, 64 guns, lost off Ushant, March 10, 1800.
- Reserve**, 60 guns, wrecked at Yarmouth; 173 drowned; November 26, 1703.
- Resistance**, 44 guns, destroyed by lightning in the Straits of Banca, July 23, 1798; 4 persons saved.
- Resistance**, 36 guns, wrecked off Cape St. Vincent, May 21, 1803.
- Resolution**, 60 guns, wrecked on the coast of Sussex, November 26, 1703.
- Resolution**, cutter, foundered at sea; all hands (60) perished; in 1797.
- Robert**, Dublin and Liverpool trader, in the Irish Sea; 60 lives lost; May 16, 1823.
- Rochdale**, transport, on Dunbary Point, near Dublin; 300 lives lost; November 19, 1807.
- Romney**, wrecked among the Scilly Isles, on October 22, 1707.
- Romney**, 50 guns, wrecked on the Haaks, November 19, 1804.
- Royal Adelaide**, steamer, wrecked on the Tongue Sands, off Margate; upwards of 400 lives lost; March 30, 1850.
- Royal Charlotte**, East Indiaman, blown up at Culpec, August 1, 1798.
- Royal Charter**, screw-steamer, wrecked off Moelfra on the coast of Anglesey; 416 lives lost; October 25–26, 1859.
- Royal George**, capsized off Spithead; upwards of 600 persons, including a large number of women, were drowned; August 29, 1782.
- Royal Sovereign**, 100 guns, destroyed by fire in the river Medway, January 29, 1696.
- Saldanha**, 36 guns, off Lough Swilly, Ireland; 300 lives lost; December 4, 1811.
- Sarah Sands**, iron screw-steamer, bound from Portsmouth to Calcutta, caught fire on November 11, but by the help of the soldiers on board (300) the conflagration was extinguished; encountered a heavy gale, and nearly foundered, but reached the Mauritius without the loss of a single life, November 21, 1857.

- Sarpedon**, 10 guns, foundered at sea; all lost (76); January 1, 1813.
- Satellite**, 16 guns, foundered in the Channel; all lost (95); December 14, 1810.
- Scarborough**, 20 guns, destroyed in a terrible tempest in the West Indies, in October 1780.
- Sceptre**, 64 guns, destroyed by fire, and wrecked in Table Bay; 291 lives lost; November 1799.
- Schiller**, screw-steamer, wrecked among the Scilly Isles; 300 lives lost; May 7, 1875.
- Scorpion**, 74 guns, burned at Leghorn, November 20, 1793.
- Sea-Gull**, 18 guns, foundered; all hands (121) lost; in 1805.
- Sea-Horse**, transport, near Tramore Bay; 365 soldiers and most of the crew drowned; January 30, 1816.
- Seine**, frigate, 44 guns, wrecked off Schelling, July 31, 1803.
- Serpent**, 18 guns, foundered on the Jamaica station; all on board (121) perished; in 1806.
- Severn**, on a rock near Grouville, December 21, 1804.
- Shark**, 28 guns, destroyed in a terrible tempest in the West Indies, in October 1780.
- Sheerness**, 44 guns, driven ashore near Ceylon, January 7, 1805.
- Sirius**, 36 guns, wrecked in an engagement with the French, off the Mauritius, August 23, 1810.
- Sobhay**, 32 guns, lost near Boston Neck, December 25, 1709.
- Solway**, royal mail-steamer, wrecked near Corunna; 28 lives lost; April 7, 1843.
- Speedwell**, cutter, went down off Dieppe, with all her crew (60), February 18, 1807.
- Spitfire**, 16 guns, went down off St. Domingo, with all her crew (121), in February 1794.
- St. George**, 98 guns, Rear-Admiral Carthew Reynolds, lost off the coast of Jutland, December 24, 1811.
- St. George**, steamer, from Liverpool to New York, destroyed by fire at sea; the crew and 70 passengers saved by the American ship *Orlando*; 51 persons perished; December 24, 1852.
- St. Paul**, merchantman, from Hong-Kong to Sydney, with 327 Chinese emigrants, wrecked on the Island of Rossel, September 30, 1858; the captain and eight of the crew left in a boat in search of assistance, and were picked up by the *Prince of Denmark* schooner. The French steamer *Styx* was despatched to the island, and brought away one Chinaman, January 25, 1859, all the rest having been killed and devoured by the natives.
- Stirling Castle**, 70 guns, lost during the terrible storm of November 26, 1703.
- Strathmore**, wrecked on one of the Crozet Islands; 40 lives lost; July 1, 1875.
- Subtle**, schooner, 10 guns, foundered off St. Bartholomew's, in the West Indies; all on board (50) perished; November 30, 1812.
- Success**, 28 guns, foundered in Cockburn Sound; all on board (60) perished; November 29, 1829.
- Suffisante**, 16 guns, off Cork, December 25, 1803.
- Sunderland**, 60 guns, wrecked off Pondicherry, January 1, 1761.
- Superb**, 74 guns, wrecked in Tellicherry Roads, East Indies, November 5, 1783.
- Swan**, sloop-of-war, foundered off Waterford; 130 persons drowned; August 4, 1782.
- Sylph**, 18 guns, wrecked on Southampton Bar, North America; out of a crew of 121, 6 persons were saved; January 17, 1814.
- Tayleur**, Australian emigrant-ship, on Lambay Island, north of Howth; about 380 lives lost; January 20, 1854.
- Telegraph**, schooner, wrecked under the Eastern Hoe, Plymouth; 1 life lost; January 20, 1817.
- Thames**, East Indiaman, off Beachy Head, February 3, 1822.
- Thames**, steamer, from Dublin to Liverpool, wrecked off St. Ives; captain and 55 passengers lost; January 4, 1841.
- Thetis**, 46 guns, off Cape Frio; 16 lives lost; March 5, 1830.

- Thunderer**, 74 guns, destroyed in a terrible tempest in the West Indies, in October 1780.
- Tilbury**, 60 guns, wrecked off Louisburg; most of the crew perished; September 25, 1759.
- Tribune**, frigate, 32 guns, wrecked off Halifax; nearly 300 persons perished; November 18, 1797.
- Trompeuse**, sloop, 16 guns, supposed to have gone down in the English Channel; all on board (86) perished; May 16, 1800.
- Tweed**, sloop, 18 guns, wrecked in Shoal Bay, Newfoundland; out of a crew of 121 persons, 64 were lost; November 5, 1813.
- Tweed**, West India steamer, wrecked on the Alacranes Reef, 70 miles north of the coast of Yucatan; 72 lives lost; February 12, 1846.
- Union**, mail-packet, sunk off Calais, January 28, 1792.
- Urchin**, gunboat, sunk while in tow of the *Hector*, in the Bay of Tetuan; 4 persons saved out of 120; in 1800.
- Utile**, sloop, 14 guns, foundered during a heavy gale on her passage from Gibraltar to Malta; all on board (76) perished; November 1801.
- Vanguard**, 70 guns, sunk at Chatham, during the terrible storm of November 26, 1703.
- Venerable**, 74 guns, wrecked at Roundem Head, near Paignton, November 24, 1804; 8 lives lost.
- Victor**, 10 guns, destroyed in a terrible tempest in the West Indies, in October 1780.
- Victor**, 16 guns, foundered on her passage from Vera Cruz to Halifax; all on board (130) perished; in 1843.
- Victory**, 100 guns, wrecked near the Isle of Alderney, October 5, 1744.
- Ville de Paris**, 104 guns, a French ship captured by Admiral Rodney; lost in a storm shortly after the victory, October 5, 1782.
- Ville du Havre**, steamer, from New York to France, came into collision with the *Loch Earn*, and sunk; out of 313 persons on board, 226 perished; November 22, 1873.
- Violet**, royal mail-steamer, lost on the Goodwin Sands, January 5, 1857.
- Wager**, wrecked on a desolate island, lat. 47° S., long. 81° 40' W., May 14, 1741.
- Waterloo**, transport, lost in Table Bay; of 330 persons on board, 189 perished; August 28, 1842.
- Weazel**, sloop, 14 guns, wrecked in Barnstaple Bay, on the north coast of Devonshire; out of a crew of 86, only 1 person was saved; January 12, 1799.
- Wildboar**, sloop, 10 guns, wrecked on the Rundel Stone, Scilly Islands; out of 76 men, 12 were lost; February 15, 1810.
- William and Mary**, packet, on the Wollies Rock, near the Holmes Lighthouse, in the English Channel; 58 persons perished; October 24, 1817.
- William and Mary**, emigrant-ship, struck on a sunken rock near the Bahamas; about 170 lives were lost; May 3, 1853.
- William Browne**, struck against an iceberg; 16 passengers who had found shelter in the long-boat were flung overboard by the crew in order to lighten her; April 19, 1841.
- William Huskisson**, Dublin and Liverpool steam-packet; 93 passengers rescued by a passing vessel; January 11, 1840.
- Will o' the Wisp**, screw-steamer, wrecked on the Barn Rock, off Lambay Island; 18 persons perished; February 9, 1855.
- Windsor**, emigrant-ship, struck on a reef near the Cape de Verde Islands, December 1, 1857.
- Woolwich**, 20 guns, lost off Barbadoes, in the West Indies; all her crew (135) perished; September 11, 1813.

York, 70 guns, lost near Harwich, November 26, 1703.

York, 64 guns, foundered in the North Sea; all on board (491) perished; some time in January 1813.

Mary, 70 guns, lost on the Goodwin Sands.

Newcastle, 60 guns, foundered at Spithead; 193 drowned.

Northumberland, 70 guns, lost on the Goodwin Sands.

Reserve, 60 guns, wrecked at Yarmouth; 173 drowned.

Resolution, 60 guns, wrecked on the coast of Sussex.

Stirling Castle, 70 guns, lost on the Goodwin Sands.

Vanguard, 70 guns, sunk at Chatham.

York, 70 guns, lost near Harwich.

All these ships of the Royal Navy were lost during the terrible storm, described by Defoe, of the 26th of November 1703.

Association, 70 guns;

Eagle;

Firebrand;

Romney.

Under the command of Sir Cloudesley Shovel—wrecked among the Scilly Isles, on October 22, 1707.

Andromeda, 28 guns.

Barbadoes, 14 guns.

Cameleon, 14 guns.

Deal Castle, 24 guns.

Defiance, 64 guns.

La Blanche, 32 guns.

Laurel, 28 guns.

Penelope, 24 guns.

Phoenix, 44 guns.

Scarborough, 20 guns.

Shark, 28 guns.

Stirling Castle, 64 guns.

Thunderer, 74 guns.

Victor, 10 guns.

All these ships were caught and destroyed in a terrible tempest in the West Indies, in October 1780. It was the greatest naval disaster England ever experienced; an entire fleet being struck off her Navy List at "one fell swoop."



 KR-171-975